NetworkWorld

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October 27, 2003 Volume 20, Number 43

'Net security gets root-level boost

■ BY CAROLYN DUFFY MARSAN AND CARA GARRETSON

A year after surviving a massive distributed denialof-service attack, the Internet's root servers are better fortified against hacker activity, thanks to behind-thescenes deployment of a routing technique known as Anycast, experts say.

With Anycast, the root server operators have more than doubled the number of server farms available to handle the highest-level DNS queries. This routing technique heightens root server resilience by multiplying the number of servers with the same IP address and balancing the load across an army of geographically dispersed servers.

A handful of the 13 root server operators have begun deploying Anycast since last year's attack, which didn't succeed in crashing DNS but rendered factor of two.



Paul Mockapetris

DNS inventor, chairman of Nominum

several root servers unavailable for legitimate queries. Experts say the deployment of Anycast is making the entire root-server system more resistant to outage.

"More of the root server operators are doing this See Root servers, page 14

Double-duty routers give Cisco VolP edge

Cisco.

Brocade to

at Storage

Networking

week. Page 8.

World this

unveil switches

■ BY PHIL HOCHMUTH

A recent software upgrade that can turn most Cisco access

routers into IP PBXs could provide users with a simple path to follow for converging voice and data networks, and at the same time is causing concern among Cisco's voice-over-IP competitors.

Cisco earlier this month launched CallManager Express— a version of its IOS software that transforms a 1700, 2600 or 3700 series router into a small-

office version of its CallManager IP PBX. While this conversion technology has been deployed in the past as an unannounced fea-

ture in IOS, it now has been packaged into a product for offices with fewer than 100 users — the average size for most business IP telephony deploy-

 $ments, analysts \ say.$

Analysts say Cisco routers integrated with IP PBX functions — such as call control, hold, transfer and voice mail — could be a

See Cisco, page 73

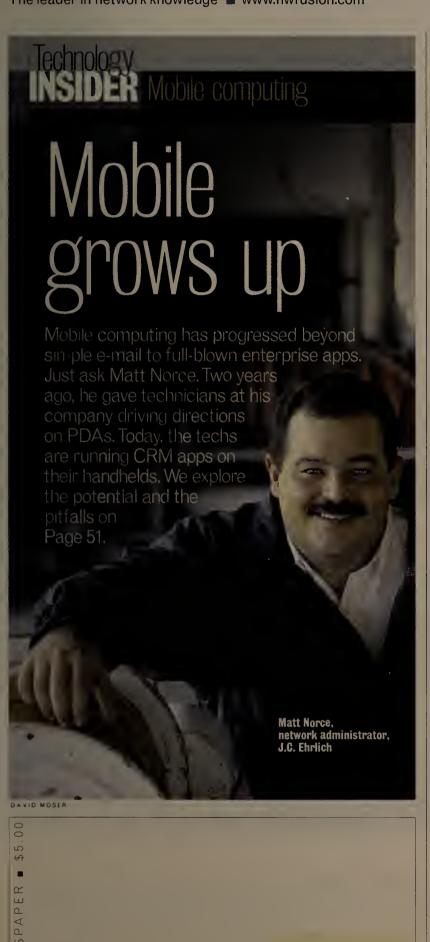
C&W ditching ATM, frame customers

■ BY DENISE PAPPALARDO

Cable & Wireless America is getting ready to pull the plug on its U.S. ATM and frame relay backbones, a move that has customers scrambling to find replacement providers and wondering about the future of the carrier's Web hosting and IP services.

The carrier warned domestic ATM and frame users in a letter dated Oct. 14 that they would have to seek an alternative service provider by Dec. 15.

See C&W. page 14





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A kindler, gentler Joel Snyder. Page 58.

Catching criminals: San Mateo cops tap a

Wi-Fi hot zone to dig into databases and dispatches.

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Feature

Tester's Choice:

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Columnists

Compendium

Remember the script kiddles Fusion Executive Editor Adam Gaffin says forget the fancyshmancy security systems: Until you do the basics first, your network will still be vulnerable. DocFinder: 8240

Wireless Wizards

Channel overlap

The Wireless Wizards help Scott figure out why, on an 802.11b access point with 11 channels, only three are non-overlapping.

DocFinder: 8241

Telework Beat

Teaching companies new tricks, Part Two Net.Worker Managing Editor Toni Kistner says the EPA is using the media and training to spur commuter benefits programs.

DocFinder: 8242

Small Business Tech

Best back-up strategies

Columnist James Gaskin advises how to choose the right data back-up system for your business. DocFinder: 8243

Digital Domicile

The world according to 2Wire

Columnist Mike Wolf says a recent 2Wire customer study reveals some surprises about home networks, gateways and

wireless. DocFinder: 8244

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News

Senate passes CAN-SPAM bill

The Senate last week passed the Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing (CAN-SPAM) bill, designed to regulate unsolicited commercial e-mail. CAN-SPAM requires commercial e-mail to include valid opt-out mechanisms and allows fines of up to \$100 per piece of spam sent with misleading header information, with maximum penalties of \$3 million for some types of spam and prison sentences for certain spamming practices. The bill also requires the Federal Trade Commission to deliver to Congress a plan to create a national do-not-spam registry within six months and authorize the FTC to launch it within nine months of the bill's passage. CAN-SPAM would have to be approved by the House of Representatives and signed by President Bush. No antispam bill has yet been approved by a committee in the U.S. House. Critics of CAN-SPAM say its provisions requiring consumers to opt out of unsolicited e-mail instead of opting in to commercial e-mail make it a pro-spam, not an anti-spam, bill.

SCO license only for big fish

■ Any company not among the country's 1,000 largest is out of luck if it's interested in getting a license from The SCO Group to protect itself from possible litigation. SCO spokesman Blake Stowell says smaller companies should still contact SCO about buying a license in the future to lock in at a discounted price, "but for right now, we're only selling to the Fortune 1000. We would rather spend a few days in the sales cycle selling to one large company in a big license deal than spend several months dealing with every individual company, large and small, to gain the same amount of revenue," he says. SCO rolled out the SCO Intellectual Property License for Linux in August as a way for companies to protect themselves from what SCO says are intellectual property violations in Linux. The license is \$699 per one processor server and will jump to \$1,400 on Nov. 1.

Google reportedly going public

Internet search leader Google could go public early next year and is considering holding a huge online auction of its shares, according to a report published last week. The *Financial Times* said in its online edition that Google executives met with investment bankers to gauge their interest in an IPO of stock. A decision by the search giant to go public is expected to create excitement among investors, and the company could be valued at between \$15 billion and \$25 billion, experts say. Furthermore, Google reportedly is considering an online auction of its shares, which would prevent prices being set by an investment bank. Since its inception in 1998, Google has taken the online search market by

FENDI M

When time travelers send spam

A Massachusetts man is not real happy with a semi-famous spammer who's been sending out requests for parts for his inter-dimensional warp generator. Seems the spammer forged the guy's domain name in his message headers last week, causing, at last count, more than 350,000 bounced messages. Read more at www.nwfu sion.com, DocFinder: 8250.

■ The Good The Bad The Ugly



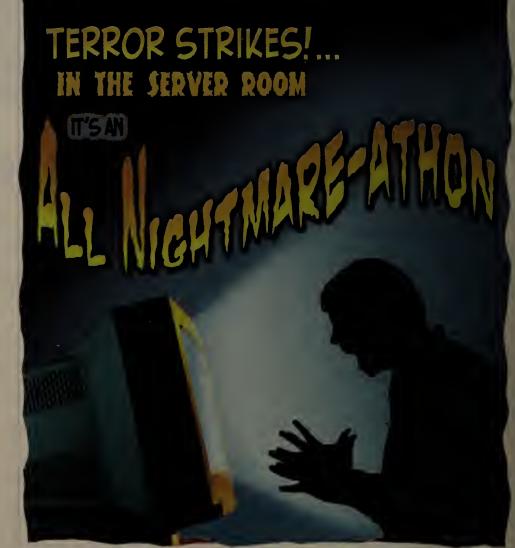
Can you dig it? The FCC has approved use of spectrum in the 71- to 76-GHz band, 81- to 86-GHz band and 92- to 95-GHz band, a move that could pave the way for new broadband services without requiring carriers to dig up pavement to lay fiber-optic cables. The narrow-beam technology that could exploit the newly available spectrum could be used to deliver point-to-point wireless LANs.



AT&T humbled. AT&T, one of the biggest critics of the WorldCom (now MCI) accounting mess, last week 'fessed up that it understated expenses by \$125 million in 2001 and 2002 and overstated net income by \$77 million as a result.



Medical Center in Boston tells the IDG News Service that a combination of firewall, network intrusion-detection systems, anti-virus software and patches worked to keep his facilities worm-free during a rash of attacks in recent months. Still, Halamka said his IT staff had to hold what he called an "all nightmare-athon" patching session in late July for the hospital's 130 Windows servers.



storm and now claims to process more than 200 million queries a day. Google also has racked up deals with other major Internet players such as AOL and Amazon.com. Company representatives were not immediately available to comment.

Qwest, AT&T in legal battle over fees

Qwest last week sued AT&T, alleging inaccurate billing of toll-free calls routed across the Qwest network. Qwest is seeking to recoup fees from AT&T lost to under-billing based on an inaccurate AT&T database of toll-free calls using Qwest's network. Qwest says that the under-billing amounted to \$15 million to \$20 million annually.AT&T denies the allegations in Qwest's lawsuit. "In the normal course of our ongoing business arrangements with Qwest, this is a contract and billing dispute that we have been working to resolve for more than the past 16 months," an AT&T spokesperson said. "We will file a formal reply to the complaint in U.S. District Court at the appropriate time." Qwest says AT&T stopped updating the toll-free number database over three years ago and informed Qwest of this last year. New toll-free numbers routed through the Qwest network since March 2000 were billed incorrectly at a lower access rate, she said.

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- SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE RESILIENCE

NetworkWorld 10/27/03 News www.nwfusion.com

Virtualization on tap from Brocade, Cisco

BY DENI CONNOR

Virtualization of storage resources will be a focus of Storage Networking World this week as Brocade Communications and

Cisco introduce Fibre Channel switches that let customers simplify management through applications that pool, replicate and back up data.

Brocade is expected to demon-

Veritas readying storage mgmt. splash

BY DENI CONNOR

Veritas Software is expected to boost its data-protection and life-cycle management offerings next week with a set of new and enhanced software products designed to help users more efficiently manage storage networks.

According to sources, the company is expected to introduce:

- A Web-based portal called CommandCentral, for managing all Veritas applications running on the storage network.
- A new version of its enterprise data back-up and recovery application. NetBackup.
- A new version of its Data Migrator product, which has been rebranded Data Lifecycle Manager.
- A desktop and laptop back-up package.
- Enhancements to Backup Exec, its product for backing up Windows and NetWare servers.

Data protection, recovery and life-cycle management software lets users better manage, migrate, archive and retrieve the data created on their networks.

CommandCentral lets customers globally view storage resource operations, report on storage processes and accurately calculate infrastructure costs for chargeback or budget allocation.

"The benefit I am trying to get out of [a package such as CommandCentral] is that it reduces my license and maintenance cost for software by being heterogenous across more products like NetBackup and Backup Exec," says Barry Brazil, enterprise SAN architect for Reliant Energy in Houston. "I use a lot of both products, and today I can't manage them from a single console. With Command-Central, if I can manage my backups through a single source, it saves me a tremendous amount of time and management headaches."

Veritas also is expected to unveil a version of its back-up and recovery software. NetBackup 5.0 will focus on letting users back up data to disk and tape, and stage backups to disk for a period of time before moving them to tape, allowing faster restores. NetBackup 5.0 also will feature enhanced Windows snapshot support and enable non-disruptive upgrades. In addition, NetBackup users will be able to perform bare metal restorations of data to drives that don't contain an operating system. It also will synchronize laptop and desktop back-up and restore operations with their server backups.

Also, the product will include new Active Directory-compatible access control features that will let profiles for different users be created. Among the other features of NetBackup is the ability to restart a file system from before the point of failure on Unix and Windows servers.

The company also will introduce enhancements to its Data Migrator product, which ensures that only frequently used information is kept permanently on online media, while infrequently needed data is migrated automatically from online devices to lower-cost secondary storage such as optical disk or tape. This product, which has been renamed Data Lifecycle Manager, now will include rules administrators can set that affect where data is stored, how it is migrated and when it is archived to tape.

Further, the company will announce enhancements to Backup Exec, its product for protecting Windows and NetWare servers. Last week, the company announced a new option for Backup Exec called the Veritas Desktop and Laptop Option, which works with Backup Exec to let administrators back up their users' desktop and laptop computers.

strate replication, data migration and virtual tape back-up capability for its Silkworm Fabric Application Platform AP7420 Fibre Channel switch and increased functionality for its Silkworm 12000 director-level switch. Cisco and IBM will show off a new product bundle consisting of the Cisco MDS 9000 MultiLayer Intelligent SAN director running IBM's TotalStorage SAN Volume Controller virtualization software.

Customers are applauding the move toward virtualization.

"Virtualization provides us the ability to manage multiple devices from one interface," says Jay Morgan, storage manager for Safe-Lite AutoGlass in Columbus, Ohio, which is testing virtualization on a Cisco MDS 9000 switch. "It also lets us manage the storage from multiple vendors, and add and manage cheap, capacity-oriented drives or tape drives in the same environment. We plan on using virtualization to do virtual tape and replication."

Previously, applications such as virtualization, replication and volume management ran on host computers or arrays where their ability to manage all the servers and storage devices on the storage-area network (SAN) was limited to certain vendors' storage devices or operating systems.

Vendors such as Falconstor and DataCore have appliances that attach to the Fibre Channel fabric to host these applications and manage a variety of server operating systems and storage gear. At the show, vendors such as Brocade, Cisco and McData are expected to follow through on their promise of technology that lets applications be placed on the Fibre Channel switch, where they can manage all the servers and storage connected to them and not introduce new hardware into the fabric.

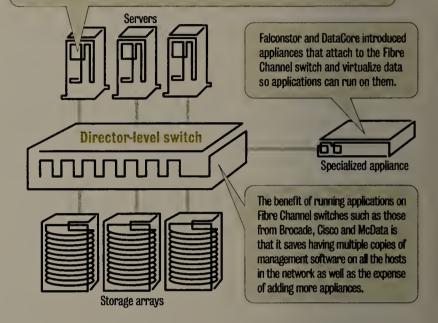
Brocade is scheduled to demonstrate replication capability for its 16-port Silkworm Fabric Application Platform AP7420 switch using software from start-up Kashya. The technology, which the company says will be available next year, automatically performs replication and recovery of data based on policies set regarding the size of the pipe and the amount of latency allowed. The technology also will be introduced as a module for the Silkworm 12000 in the first half of 2004.

Brocade is expected to show off

Intelligent Fibre Channel switches debut

Brocade, Cisco and McData switches now can run applications that virtualize the storage resources of a network and then replicate, back up, manage or provision data.

Previously, applications were installed on servers and were able to manage only a specific group of other servers or storage systems. They also were installed on storage systems where the same was true — they were able to manage only certain operating systems or storage systems.



data migration services from startup Incipient running on the AP7420, which lets users migrate data between different storage systems without disrupting it.

Brocade also will demonstrate the capability of its Silkworm Fabric Application Platform AP7420 hardware to perform backups to a virtualized group of RAID arrays and Just a Bunch of Disks instead of to tape, using software from start-up Alacritus.

The company also is set to introduce an option for replication over any distance using CNT's UltraNet Edge Storage Router, which allows remote Fibre Channel or Fibre Connection disk mirroring and storage-area network (SAN) interconnection over IP,ATM or SONET networks.

It also is expected to announce as soon as next week new circuitry for its Silkworm 12000 director-level switch that simplifies its management capability. Current Silkworm 12000s are split into two management domains, each consisting of 64 ports. The new circuitry will let all 128 ports be included in the same domain.

Gary Pilafas, senior storage/systems architect for United Airlines Loyalty Services in Chicago, is looking forward to using Brocade's single-domain Silkworm 12000.

"When Brocade introduces its single-domain 12000, I'm going to [convert my switches] to that," Pilafas says. "I can then have one domain with 128 ports. Today I have to have two domains for each Silkworm 12000 switch logically and do trunking from Side A to Side B. With two domains in the switch, you have to have trunks and you lose four ports on each side. At \$2,000 per port, that's \$16,000 I'll save."

The company also is expected to introduce a 256-port director-level switch by year-end.

Cisco's and IBM's package lets users administer applications such as point-in-time copy, replication or volume management across a heterogeneous SAN from an MDS 9000 director-level switch.

Using the package, IT administrators will be able to pool the data on disparate storage systems into logical pools, where further management or provisioning can take place without taking any of the servers or storage offline. Cisco has developed a Caching Services Module that hosts the SAN Volume Controller software This module, which has 8G bytes of memory and is hot-swappable and redundant, fits in the Cisco MDS 9500 directors or the MDS 9216 fabric switch. It replaces the SAN Volume Controller running on an IBM eServer xSeries server introduced earlier this year. The IBM SAN Volume Controller for Cisco MDS 9000, which consists of two Caching Services Modules and software, is expected to be available in December for \$112,000.

siemens nortel avaiva shoreline cisco

The IP PBX company rated #1 by IT professionals...



*Nemertes Research, Implementing IP Telephony Report, July 2003
This report was not commissioned by Shoreline, nor was it sponsored by Shoreline.
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Capellas says MCI to stress wireless

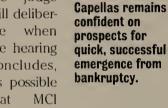
BY DENISE PAPPALARDO

ORLANDO — MCI CEO Michael Capellas used last week's Gartner Symposium/ lTxpo to preview what's next for the embattled carrier, assuming it leaps what might be its final hurdle before emerging from bankruptcy protection.

This week, the federal bankruptcy court in the Southern District of New York is expected

to hold a hearing to confirm MCl's reorganization plan.

While it's not known long the judge will deliberwhen the hearing concludes. it's possible that



MCI CEO Michael

might begin 2004 free and clear.

If that's the case, expect to hear a lot from MCl on the mobility and convergence fronts. But don't expect MCI to build its own wireless network, given that there are six national wireless service providers already oper-

"Will you see us be pretty aggressive in partnering in the wireless space? You bet," Capellas said.

MCl could team with wireless carriers such as Cingular Wireless, Nextel Communications and T-Mobile that could use MCl to provide the local, long-distance or Internet access pieces to a well-rounded service bundle.

MCI exited the wireless wholesale services market soon after it filed for bankruptcy protection in the summer of 2002 and also sold off its local fixed wireless network. Its paging business is on the auction block

Capellas also said customers can expect to see more converged voice and data services from MCl. Even through bankruptcy the carrier played up its MCl Advantage services that support voice and data over a single Internet access line.

Gartner: Time is now for VolP

PBXs starting to make the long trek toward obsolescence.

BY TIM GREENE

ORLANDO — Bringing voice over IP into corporate networks is inevitable, so businesses should be well on their way to at least testing the technology, according to Gartner.

This year, for the first time, sales of communications servers that support IP are expected to exceed sales of traditional PBXs that don't, Gartner analysts said last week at the company's annual Symposium/ITxpo, And by 2006 sales of traditional PBXs will be relatively insignificant, they said.

With that shift, IT departments should have IP voice gear running in pockets in their networks, even if their companies have no firm plans to adopt it, users say.

"I think it would be foolish not to have that option," says James Lieupo, network administrator for Florida's Department of Veterans Affairs. Lieupo has installed Avaya Software's IP-capable voice gear in the department's six nursing homes.

Even though they are performing as traditional TDM key systems, IP voice is coming, he

He is looking to run IP voice on the state data network as a cost-cutting measure. Also, the state is seeking bids for its voice backbone, and he predicts that some of the proposals will include IP services.

Similarly, Watkins Motor Lines in Lakeland, Fla., started experimenting with Cisco IP phones two years ago to become familiar with the technology, says Dave Lichtel, the com-

pany's telecom director. Now it has bought Cisco Call Center gear to replace aging PBX equipment. The company plans to use the

gear to expand its help desk and call center functionality by integrating phone calls with on-screen data displays about callers. The cost of going with IP vs. TDM was about a wash.

The IP gear also can streamline the company's interactive voice response (IVR) and Web-based shipment-tracking systems. Callers with the old IVR can find the whereabouts of their shipments over the phone, and they can get the same information on a Web

page. But with IP voice, the data can be stored on one server, Lichtel says.

The company is a Cisco shop, and its routers include IP voice features imbedded in IOS that will pave the way to an eventual company-wide IP telephony rollout. "It's something we will exploit in the future," he says.

The IS director for a major hardware chain, who asked not to be identified, says the company is looking into IP telephony via trials, and is attracted by potential cost savings. But, he says, with more than 1,000 stores, he has to be convinced the technology can handle such a large deployment reliably.

Gartner told attendees that IP telephony is

ready for deployment technologically, but business concerns might override making the shift in some companies. The cost of the

The number of IP-

capable voice systems

sold in North America

will surpass the number

of pure, traditional

phone systems by year-

end, 160,000 to 110,000,

Gartner says.

phones is a major issue.

"The cost of replacement telephones alone is reason enough to delay conversion of all desktops," said Jeff Snyder, a Gartner research vice president. "Network readiness, voice security and policy/[quality of service] rule management add further costs to conversion, and require additional planning as well."

Snyder said most corporate IP data networks that are more than 3 years old will need to be upgraded if

the company wants to run high-quality voice over it. That is the key issue Lieupo wants to come to an agreement with Florida's state SunCom data network before he tries passing voice traffic over it. If he gets the OK, he says he can save money. "I'm already paying for [the data network]. I'll have to see what the state will allow," he said.

Snyder cited three key reasons why businesses should shift to IP voice now:

- Old PBXs are being replaced anyway.
- The company is moving to a new building and budget is available for the change.
- IP voice offers business advantages that warrant the investment.

Red Hat enhances scalability of Linux OS

BY JENNIFER MEARS

Red Hat has rolled out a beefedup version of its Linux operating system with better scalability, improved performance and support for a wider range of hardware

Enterprise Linux 3, released last week, includes a threading technology called Native Posix Threading Library. The company says the technology will improve the performance of applications such as Java-based software and databases that run multiple tasks concurrently.

The new release also includes support for larger symmetric multiprocessing, memory and 1/O configurations, largely in



response to customers who might look at Linux for use in server clusters and on bigger servers running ERP, CRM and database applications.

Red Hat Enterprise Linux 3 is based on common code that will let it run on a variety of hardware platforms including Intel x86 and Itanium, AMD Opteron and IBM's zSeries mainframes, iSeries, pSeries and S/390 servers. In the past, Red Hat added support for new systems incrementally. Common code will let users more easily scale servers, Red Hat says.

Adecco, a staffing and human resources firm that manages more than 500,000 employees annually used Linux this year for Web and application servers. Updates in Red Hat Enterprise Linux 3 make it a viable alternative for critical database applications now running on Unix, says Joseph Pagliaccio, IT director for the Melville, N.Y., firm.

"We're very excited about the

memory management," he says. "We're hoping [that] with improved memory management we'll have the same success we've seen with application servers and Web servers moving to Linux. [Red Hat Enterprise Linux 3] opens up the possibility of doing this with the database environment."

Bill Claybrook, an analyst at Aberdeen Group, says the improved performance and scalability, particularly the support for Native Posix Threading Library, will help push Linux deeper into enterprise data centers.

"It's one of those features that's bringing Linux more in line with the functionality that's been provided by Unix," he says. "That's the goal. All of these features that creep into Linux over time that make it look like Unix are a good thing."

Red Hat Enterprise Linux 3 is priced as annual subscriptions ranging from \$180 for the basic WS desktop version to as much as \$18,000 for the enterprise AS version on IBM mainframes with full, premium support. Current Red Hat Enterprise Linux subscribers can upgrade at no charge.



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Office takes over collaboration reins

Users ponder implications as Microsoft Office takes over tasks from Exchange.

BY JOHN FONTANA

Microsoft officially has passed its collaboration torch from Exchange to Office in the hopes of igniting corporate upgrades to the applications suite, but users are leery of the software giant's plan.

At the launch last week of Office 2003 and Exchange 2003, the desktop suite took the collaboration center stage once held by Exchange, which just two years ago was the nerve center of Microsoft's collaborative strategy.

Now Exchange has been folded into Microsoft's Office System 2003, a collection of servers and services that form a collaboration infrastructure with Office as a front-end client. The package can create and share XML-based data, as opposed to a set of static, stand-alone desktop applications.

Microsoft's Chief Software Architect Bill Gates says Office System will drive collaboration, highlighted by XML-based data and application integration.

It's the latest turn of events that has seen Exchange go from e-mail server to collaborative application-development platform and back again. The new strategy is intended to recharge upgrades to Office, which has seen revenue flatten over the past five years. Microsoft also says it hopes the plan will generate interest in a collection of servers that support everything from document management to instant messaging to business workflow.

The focus now is on selling Office as the foundation of customized applications to send and receive data as part of business processes, and on proving to corporations that a bulky and expensive desktop client is better than a browser

Users and analysts say it is hard to accept and must be approached with a long-term plan.

"We're trying to figure out how much we want to bite off," says Tony Saxman, director of information services for the College of Business at Oregon State University in Corvalis. "There can be a fair amount of adjusting to do." The college has been a regular early adopter of Exchange technology, but Saxman says Exchange can no longer support the hosting and housing of collaborative data and will return to being an e-mail engine.

"When we first started out, we took the collaborative features as they came out," Saxman says. "Now we have to look at the big picture and ask what we need so we can connect to other universities and students. How do we do that?" He says a likely place to start will be SharePoint Portal Server, a document management server that is part of Office System.

Analysts say any moves should be highly orchestrated.

"You have to be aware of what is going on here," says Chris LeTocq, an analyst with Guernsey Research. "You start something in one place and people will need software in another place. You need a collaboration roll-out plan, and it should probably be a long-term plan."

Long term because Office System starts with Office 2003

Microsoft's Office System is a collection of software and hosted services designed for building a collaboration infrastructure with the Office suite of applications as the front end

Product	Purpose
Office 2003	With new additions infoPath and OneNote, the application suite is the front end for collaboration. Support for XML is key to importing and exporting data.
SharePoint Portal Server 2003	Adds search and document management features to file storage and to adhoc team workspaces created using SharePoint Services in Windows 2003.
Exchange 2003	Back to pure messaging.
Project Server 2003	Formal project management package that integrates with SharePoint sites.
BizTalk Server 2004	Supports application integration and business workflow.
Live Commun Ications Server 2003	Instant messaging and presence support in Office applications, SharePoint sites.
Live Meeting	Hosted service that incorporates Web conferencing into the Office System.
Windows Server 2003	The foundation operating system for collaboration, including network, security, rights management and directory services.
Visual	The development platform for building XML-based

and Windows Server 2003, then incorporates multiple back-end servers to support asynchronous and real-time data exchange. Also included will be integration middleware and a set of development tools for building XML applications based on Office (see graphic).

Studio.Net

lt's an infrastructure Microsoft is feeling pressure to create. Rival IBM/Lotus is building its own collaborative infrastructure by marrying components of Notes/Domino with its WebSphere middleware line. Competitors such as Apple, Corel, Oracle and Sun also are jumping into the game to merge business applications and collaborative strategies.

"Microsoft had to do something to bring more cohesion to the collaboration pieces that it was cobbling together," says Dwight Davis, an analyst with Summit Strategies. "It makes sense to consolidate all the collaboration under a common client, but it seems a stretch that IT will upgrade to Office 2003 to get that collaboration."

Others say XML integration in Office, which lets it contribute data directly to business processes, will be inviting to end users. For example, OneSource, a vendor that provides company profile data, including financial information and analyst reports, now can publish its XML-based data directly to a Word document or Excel spreadsheet without the need for a custom connector.

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WebEx adds one-click meetings

BY JASON MESERVE

WebEx Communications last week rolled out a number of enhancements to its Web conferencing service, including the ability to launch a meeting from any Windows application.

Customers now can set up a meeting from any Windows program by right-clicking and selecting the WebEx meeting option. WebEx also is adding Meeting Center Web conference access to the Microsoft Office toolbar and offering integration with Outlook, letting end users schedule a WebEx meeting in the calendar dialog.

See WebEx, page 16



WebEx now offers multipoint video in its Web conferencing application. Users only need a standard Webcam to capture video. **Pricey integration**

Large companies spent

an average of

on integration in 2002,

and midsize companies

spent \$1.1 million, accord-

ing to AMR Research.

Database vendor moves back end to the middle

■ BY ANN BEDNARZ

Database maker InterSystems is expected to unveil integration software next week aimed at making it easier for users to build composite applications that cull data from existing legacy systems.

InterSystems' new Ensemble platform combines the vendor's database technology with new integration tools, an application server and a common development environment. Modeling and management features help users integrate data sources, map business processes, and build and monitor composite applications.

At the core of the Ensemble suite is an object database for managing and storing metadata, messages and process information. This persistent object engine, which is based on InterSystems' Cache relational database technology, is what differentiates Ensemble from other application integration suites, says Roy Schulte, a vice president at Gartner.

The object engine sits between systems and makes it easier for users to develop new applications by masking the complexity of the links to heterogeneous backend systems, Schulte says.

"The new code, rather than going out to

get data from existing databases, goes to this virtual object which is sitting in the middle of the network," Schulte says. "Behind the scenes there may be a lot of sophisticated things happening to map that persistent object in the middle back to the actual original source application databases. But you don't have to see all the ugliness."

While InterSystems' approach is novel — neither BEA Systems nor IBM nor Microsoft offers anything similar

— the technology is not mainstream and

requires learning a new style of development, he says.

Moreover, InterSystems will have to work to gain recognition among users because it's not known as a player in the integration market, says Mark Ehr, a senior analyst at Enterprise Management Associates.

One customer that's already onboard is

the State of Florida's Department of Children and Families (DCF). The agency uses Ensemble to construct a consolidated view of data that's scattered across dozens of disparate databases and accessed by 59 different systems.

The goal is to create a single view of all relevant data about a client, says Glenn Palmiere, IT director at DCF in Tallahassee. DCF con-

ducted a pilot project last year to connect five systems and is working to extend its Ensemble deployment across all 59 systems, Palmiere says. Down the road, DCF plans to pull in information from other agencies that deal with health and human services in Florida.

"We're basically going to create a single

family interface so that regardless of which agency provides the service and regardless of the system that the data is stored on, an individual will be able to access all the information related to a person," he says.

Ensemble's real-time characteristics are critical, Palmiere says. Rather than collecting and storing information in a data warehouse, Ensemble lets DCF extract data elements at the moment a user needs the information, he says. "When you're talking about data that's relevant to an individual's life or care, you do not want data that was refreshed a week ago," he says.

Ensemble runs on HP Alpha OpenVMS, HP Alpha Tru64, Unix, HP-UX, IBM AlX, Linux, Sun Solaris and Windows platforms. Pricing starts at \$125,000 per CPU. ■



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Root servers

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routing technique, and the DNS is more robust than ever," says Paul Mockapetris, inventor of the DNS and chairman of DNS software vendor Nominum. "The DNS is more resilient than it was a year ago by a factor of two."

A reinforced DNS is a boon to enterprise network managers who need a rock-solid root server and DNS system for all of their IP services to function. However, one network executive resists putting much faith in a new DNS technique until it's been tested under attack.

DNS is "still not as secure as it could be, or should be," says Stephen Lengel, systems engineering manager at The Service-Master Co. in Downers Grove, Ill., which provides heating, cooling, landscaping, pest control and appliance maintenance services, and has about 20,000 users on its network. Despite the use of techniques such as Anycast, no technology is 100% safe from attack, he adds. "It's usually just a matter of time before someone exploits it or finds a hole in it."

While distributed DoS attacks have occurred for years, last October's assault on the Internet's 13 root servers — which run the master directory for lookups that match domain names with their corresponding IP addresses — served as a wake-up call to the vulnerabilities inherent in the distributed design of DNS. Below the root servers are the servers that support top-level domains such as .com, .net and .org, and below the top-level domain servers are hosts of Web sites.

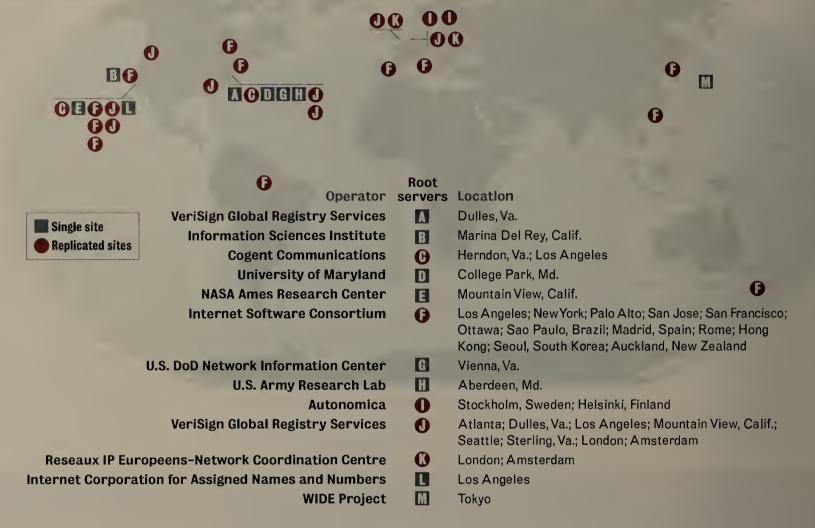
During a distributed DoS attack, a hacker hijacks machines across the Internet and uses them to send a flood of requests to a server until it becomes overwhelmed and stops functioning.

Last October, the root servers were under a distributed DoS attack for about an hour, causing several servers to stop being available to regular Internet traffic. However, the remaining root servers withstood the attack and ensured that the Internet's overall performance was not degraded. Nonetheless, this was the most serious hacker attack ever on this key piece of the Internet infrastructure, and it was an eye-opener for the pot-server operators.

Without the root servers, the Internet cannot function. Named by the letters A through M, the root servers are operated by U.S. government agencies, universi-

Copies of Internet root servers proliferate worldwide

Using a routing technique called Anycast, operators have more than doubled the number of root servers over the past year, bringing the total to 34. The expansion will help ward off DDoS attacks such as the one launched a year ago.



ties, nonprofit organizations and companies such as VeriSign. Of the original 13 root servers, 10 are located in the U.S., one in Asia and two in Europe.

With Anycast, the root server operators are replicating these servers around the world. Four of the root-server operators — including the Internet Software Consortium and VeriSign — have mirrored their root servers. There are now 34 locations worldwide with root servers or replicas deployed.

Using this technique, Internet addresses are "more like 800 numbers that get routed to call centers," Mockapetris says. "There are...more root servers scattered around the network than there used to be. It's not necessarily that the servers are more available but that the [data is] more distributed."

As extra root servers are deployed using Anycast, the root server system acquires additional capacity if another distributed DoS attack occurs. DNS experts say the root server system is much better equipped to respond to this type of attack than it was a year ago, because of Anycast and concurrent hardware and software upgrades.

"Trying to attack the root DNS servers is probably one of the most foolish things you can do," says Daniel Golding, senior consultant with Burton Group. "It's easy to down a single [Web] site, but with a distributed infrastructure that's moving to Anycast, it's just really kind of dumb. It's not going to be that effective."

Anycast is a routing technique that announces a particular block of IP addresses can be reached from a number of routers. The technique tells the Internet that queries to that address space should go to the closest available router. The 10-year-old technique is built into IPv6, the next-generation of IP,but this is the first time Anycast has been deployed in the DNS.

"Anycasting is something that had been discussed among all of the root operators for a considerable amount of time, long before the attacks [of last October]," says Ken Silva, vice president of networks and information security at VeriSign. But after the attacks "was the time to roll it out," he says.

Starting last November, the Internet Software Consortium began deploying mirrored copies of its F root server around the globe using Anycast. Since then, the consortium has announced mirrored copies of its U.S.-based root server being deployed in Brazil, Canada, Hong Kong, Korea, New Zealand and Spain. Today, the F root server and its replicas are located in 12 sites.

A year ago, VeriSign had a single address space for both its A and J root servers, both of which remained operational during the distributed DoS attack. Since then, VeriSign has acquired new address space for the J root and deployed mirrored copies of it around the globe.

VeriSign this year used Anycast to mirror its J root server in six locations in the U.S. plus London and Amsterdam. VeriSign also has two mobile Anycast sites for its J root, which can reside anywhere within VeriSign's global network infrastructure if needed.

"We tested Anycast for about a year...to monitor its behavior," Silva says. "These are important servers, and we didn't want to make any rash decisions about deploying it." Silva says Anycast is working well and hasn't introduced any major complexities or problems into the Internet.

However, VeriSign has not used Anycast to mirror the A root server that sits in a highly secured facility in Dulles, Va.

"The A root sits on an address block that is shared with other legacy services such as Whois and an InterNIC FTP server, so Anycasting that address block is not a good idea right now," Silva says. "The A root server has sufficient capacity for now, but we ultimately will Anycast that

server" after splitting off the legacy services.

Anycast has many benefits besides protection against distributed DoS attacks. ISPs get faster response times to their root-server lookups because the closest available server handles the queries and the servers are more distributed.

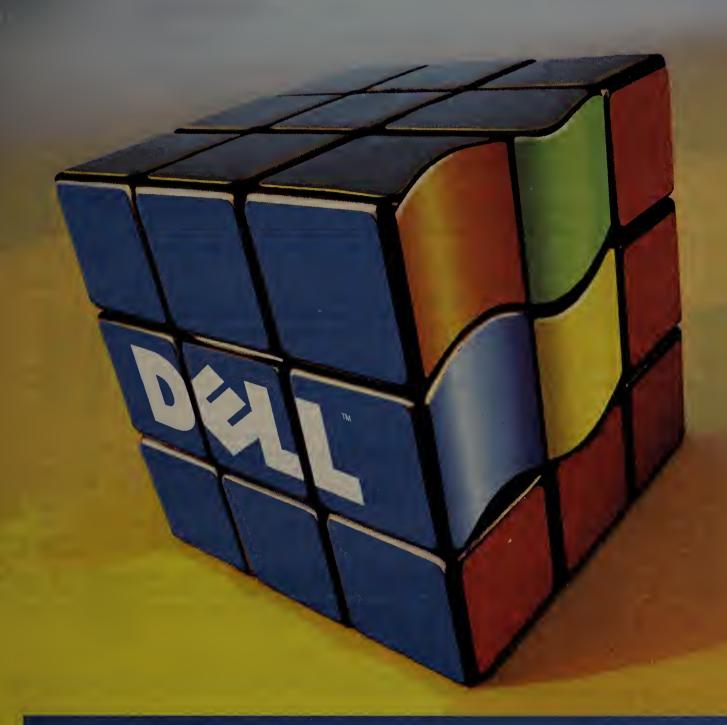
The root-server system is more resilient now because many regions of the world have local root servers that can continue to operate if a major physical connection to the rest of the Internet suffers an outage.

The root-server operators have spent millions of dollars on the hardware, software and engineering expertise required to set up mirrored sites around the globe using Anycast. VeriSign says it has spent \$150 million in the past two and a half years rolling out a more secure and resilient infrastructure for its A and J roots and the .com and .net top-level domains. This investment includes the deployment of Anycast.

"The attacks of October last year didn't come as a surprise to us," Silva says. "We feel we were prepared, but now we feel like we need to be prepared for something even bigger."



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Net execs are bullish on outsourcing

Small to midsize companies rely on managed services rather than hiring in-house staff.

BY DENISE DUBIE

MANSFIELD, MASS. — Bertucci's James Lux told an audience of network managers last week that he turned to outsourcing to quickly and inexpensively connect the restaurant chain's 90 locations with voice over IP, speed credit-card transaction processing and support online applications.

"IT is a hard sell in my business. Restaurant people care about good food and service, not about how to manage routers," Lux, vice president of I'T, said at the local event sponsored by Vanguard Managed Solutions. "I have to make a good case to spend more money in IT."

Lux convinced upper manage-

ment by detailing how outsourced network services would reduce the time it took to process transactions from about 15 seconds to more like 2 to 3 seconds. Rolling out Vanguard's 340 Router and signing on for managed services with the company helped him cut long-distance charges by half and bring Bertucci's up to speed without having to add IT personnel.

"I estimated for the network expertise, I would have had to spend \$100,000 on at least one IT specialist in-house," Lux said. "If I was thinking like a larger IT-focused business, it would make sense to hire someone. But as a restaurant, it makes sense to out-source"

According to Gartner, the mar-



LETT is a hard sell in my business. Restaurant people care about good food and service, not about how to manage routers.

James Lux
Vice president of IT, Bertucci's

ket for outsourced IT and management services reached almost \$280 billion last year and should grow to \$410 billion by 2007. A study conducted by ThinkStrategies found 39% of companies doing some form of

network outsourcing and another 17% considering network outsourcing.

Of those companies currently outsourcing, approximately 60% are doing so to reduce head count and other costs. About 20% of the companies are seeking to improve service quality and reliability, the study found.

Of those considering outsourcing, 40% say they would like to cut costs, and 30% want to improve service quality and reliability, according to ThinkStrategies.

Among companies not considering outsourcing, 62.5% are concerned that it will cost more than expected and half are afraid of losing control of network operations, says Jeff Kaplan, managing director of the IT consulting firm.

Outsourcing leaders include CSC, Electronic Data Systems and IBM, all of which sign multimillion dollar deals that encompass multiple technologies with enterprise customers. But service providers such as NetSolve, SevenSpace and Vanguard typically sign contracts designed to fill IT skills gaps quickly for small to midsize companies such as Bertucci's.

Stephen Lynch, director of technology infrastructure at Citizens Financial Group, uses Vanguard's Managed Router service. He said that when his company acquired another company in 2001, he had just two days to get 400 locations connected to Citizens' corporate network. He also needed to ensure consistency across the acquired locations and Citizens' core network. He decided to outsource the job.

"We like to say it was the Jurassic Park of technology, and we had to convert each location," he said.

Citizens' was able to get a frame relay network up and running parallel to the TDM network the company had in place. With a 12-to 15-person team, Citizens worked with Vanguard to coordinate legacy data, account information and systems. Most important to Lynch was the flexibility of working with an outsourcer.

"We were able to quickly establish communications, negotiate pricing and create a workable contract," Lynch said.

C&W

continued from page 1

The shutdown is the latest strategy change at the struggling carrier that has kept customers on edge and analysts on their toes. "I wouldn't take anything they say as a guarantee," says Ron Kaplan, an analyst at IDC. "They have exited a lot of markets, and they keep redefining their core business."

In May 2002, the company dropped U.S. customers that only used its services domestically, but stressed its commitment to customers with multinational service needs. However, this past June the carrier announced plans to exit the U.S. market entirely (www.nwfusion.com, DocFinder: 8249). In between, the carrier carried out a major business restructuring, laying off more than 3,000 employees at one point.

C&W could have sold its remaining 100 to 400 ATM and frame customer contracts, as it did earlier this year with other contracts, but the service provider decided that was not an option. The carrier likely has been migrating as many of its legacy data service customers as it could onto its IP VPN services over the last several months, says Brownlee Thomas, an analyst at Giga Information Group.

The carrier declined to say specifically why it is decommissioning the backbones rather than selling them off, offering

Breaking the bad news

Excerpts from a letter C&W sent to customers:

Oct. 14, 2003

Dear Customer,

Cable & Wireless in the U.S. remains committed to providing exceptional value to the U.S. marketplace, and we are continuing to evaluate our service offerings in order to deliver the highest quality services to our customers.

Based on this ongoing evaluation we are raitonalizing our product set to focus on hosting and IP solutions... As a result, Cable & Wireless in the U.S. will no longer offer the Frame Relay and ATM services we currently provide to your company.

only that it is "trying to make the business stronger and profitable."

Thomas says that ridding itself of the ATM and frame backbones — which presumably weren't pulling in much revenue — might make the rest of C&W America more attractive to suitors.

However, that's of little comfort to the carrier's hosting and IP service customers.

"There is some concern about what they're going to do," says Richard Thimble, manager of IT at Moldflow, a software company for the plastics industry, which relies on the carrier to manage a 15-site IP VPN in the U.S., Europe and Asia. "But there's not a lot I can do about that. We're under contract, and so are they."

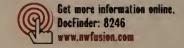
Thimble says even if C&W is successful selling off its hosting

and IP services businesses, there's no guarantee he'll be happy with the outcome.

"There are certain companies that I wouldn't want to buy them," he says.

IDC ranked C&W as the second-largest Web hosting service provider in the U.S. coming into this year, with a 13.4% share of the market IBM Global Services is the market leader, while AT&T, Digex, Electronic Data Systems and MCI are among the other players. C&W was ranked as the 10th-largest business ISP in the U.S. last year.

The company says it will continue to offer ATM and frame relay services outside the U.S.



WehEx

continued from page 12

The Windows integration effort seems to mirror what Microsoft is doing with its Live Meeting Web conferencing offering (formerly PlaceWare), a chief competitor.

"Web conferencing is big into scheduling, but it won't be part of the way we work until it is part of our ad hoc culture," says Andy Nilssen, a senior analyst with Wainhouse Research. "One-click starts making Web conferencing more ingrained into the way we work."

WebEx also now offers multipoint video capability, letting any participant with a basic Webcam be seen by others during a conference. Admittedly, the company is not honing in on the traditional video-conferencing vendors. "This is not designed to compete with the Polycoms of the world. It's basic video to enhance the WebEx experience," says Praful Shah, vice president of strategic communications at WebEx.

Other additions to the service include a new note-taking panel to let meeting minutes be recorded, and the ability to provide meeting transcripts (minutes, presentations and documents used) to participants when the conference ends.

WebEx says existing customers will get the new features automatically. Pricing remains the same, with a \$100 per port, per month, charge for the basic service and \$200 per port, per month, fee for advanced features. Audioconferencing is billed separately through WebEx, or customers can integrate their existing audio services.

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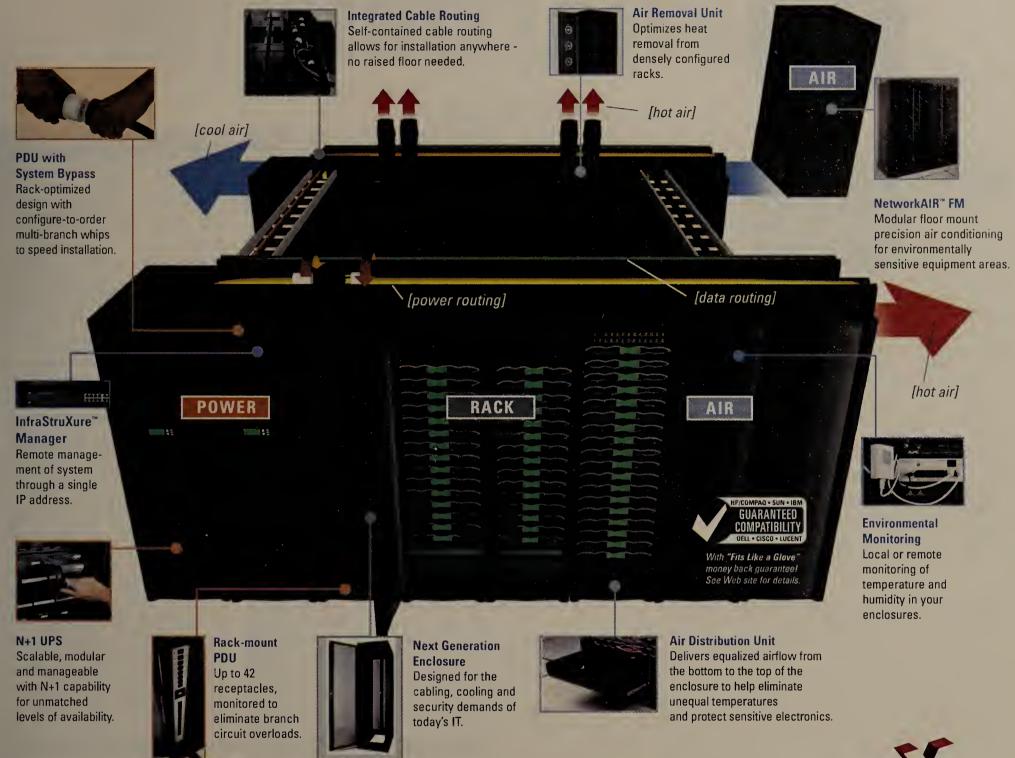
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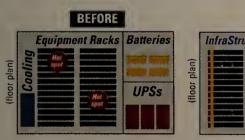
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■ IBM last week announced a number of enhancements to its Shark Enterprise Storage System Model 800 arrays designed to increase the performance and ease of management of the storage systems. The ESS 800's

Peer to Peer Remote Copy disaster-recovery software will support the Fibre Channel interconnect standard, which means customers now will be able to do remote backup and recovery with fewer switches and networking devices than the Enterprise Systems Connection protocol, which the current models of Shark employ. When the enhancements become available Nov. 21, the ESS 800 also will include an optional new 750-MHz PowerPC processor called Turbo II, which will increase the array's performance by 30%, according to IBM. IBM also has extended its support of the Storage Networking Industry Association's Storage Management Initiative standard so that more of Shark's capabilities will be available to software written to the SMI standard.

■ Meanwhile, IBM has backed up Sony Ericsson Mobile Communications' introduction of its P900 smartphone with a set of software offerings, including a VPN feature and an easier way to set up access to enterprise applications. Mobile employees will be able to connect securely to applications over an intranet or the Internet using the VPN capability. IBM's WebSphere Everyplace Connection Manager can create an encrypted VPN on IP networks and non-IP or private packet radio networks. The basic applications IBM is making available on the phone are e-mail and personal information manager functions. Its WebSphere Everyplace Access middleware, which includes both server-based and client elements, supports Microsoft Outlook and IBM's Lotus Notes for e-mail and PIM. For instant messaging, it initially will support only Lotus Notes Instant Messaging. The P900 smartphone is expected to be available in the first quarter of 2004. Price should range from \$466 to \$582, Sony Ericsson says.

Dell exec: Standards, simplicity are key



Dell continues to inch its way deeper into corporate data centers with a standards-based, modular approach to computing that is starting to catch on industrywide. Competitors such as HP,IBM and Sun are recognizing a move away from proprietary systems and toward standard, low-cost boxes. But how will Dell — which continues to post positive earnings even in

these tough economic times — keep its position as the low-cost leader as other systems vendors move into its territory? Network World senior editors Deni Connor and Jennifer Mears recently spoke with Dell President and COO Kevin Rollins to hear about where Dell is heading.

How do you envision the computing center and the networked infrastructure supporting it to change in the next couple of years?

As standards continue to emerge you will see more and more Intel and Microsoft/Linux-based systems in the data center, and a continued decline in the Unix space. That's obviously advantageous to us. Many of our competitors have big bets in the Unix space, so we believe that that's going to continue to deteriorate their performance and be a drag. At the same time, customers are moving more to standards-based products. We only have those, and all our efforts of development and customer satisfaction are based on those products. We see that the move in the industry technologically is coming toward us.

How does Dell use standards to commoditize a market and capi-

talize on it?

If you look at where standards play, they don't play very well with companies that have proprietary structures. They don't have a cost structure in terms of [research and development] and their sales models that really supports it. Subsequently, you've seen what were the largest server companies in the world lose money in their current enterprise businesses. The issue is when you move to standards, cost, logistics, distribution and efficiency become extremely important. Those companies are not set up to fly in that environment. Take Sun: They were always Unix and they're having trouble. HP is the largest Intel server company in the world, and even they don't make any money. So the real benefit is we already have a model that is refined for that standards-based, commodity-based environment. As we see more software and systems management software come and support standards — which we are — it flies into the sweet spot of our business model and leaves the sweet spot of our competitors' business

What do you think of high-level directions such as utility, autonomic, grid or on-demand computing? How real are they, and do they pose any threat to Dell's business?

They are very fancy buzzwords for models that have existed in the past that have proven unsuccessful. If you assume that the status quo will never change and that companies will continue to have all the complexity and challenges in the data center, there will be some of them who will want an on-demand type of capability. The vast majority of systems that are sold are not to that type of environment. They are to small and midsize businesses and large companies that are not looking for that kind of value and are finding they can move to a grid structure, which is more aligned with standards and simplicity. They

See Dell, page 22

Avaya suite extends call-center apps

■ BY PHIL HOCHMUTH

Avaya last week unveiled software that the company says will let customers extend call-center capabilities to multiple

The Customer Interaction Suite is server software that could help improve efficiency of large customer-service centers by integrating voice, e-mail and text chat callcenter capabilities with other applications such as interactive voice response (IVR) and back-end CRM system integration.

While these features from Avaya are not

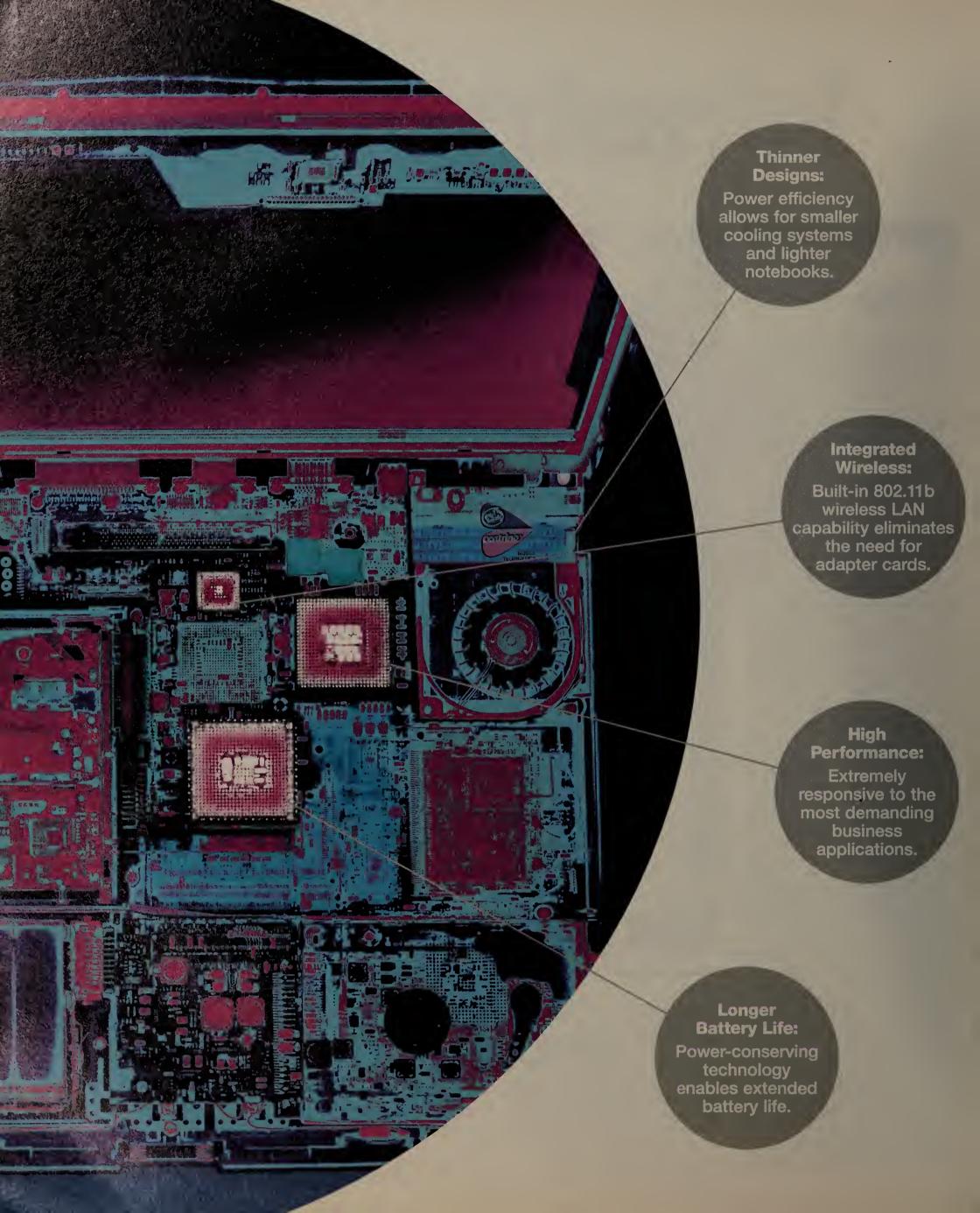
new, the twist with this latest release is that the applications now can run on a standard server, instead of in hardware on a proprietary automatic call distributor (ACD). Avaya says this feature can let customers use advanced call-center applications on a wider variety of ACDs, including IP ACDs, and distribute features to multiple locations.

"This is more of a regrouping of products by Avaya," says Mary Wardley, an IDC analyst who covers the call-center market. While not breakthrough technology, the Call Center Suite should help businesses better organize their customer contact infrastructure, she says.

There are a lot of out-of-date call centers out there," she says. "They run a jumble of technologies that are not integrated well and kind of grew up in the call center organically."

Wardley adds that deploying these types of call-center applications on servers instead of digital boards on ACDs should lower the cost of deploying and maintaining these applications.

Avaya's Customer Interaction Suite is See Avaya, par 22



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TOLLY ON TECHNOLOGY Kevin Tolly



he economy seems to be coming back to life and much of the technology overkill that helped our networks survive a few tough years is being used up. Yet, if any one lesson was learned, it was that, for the foreseeable future, we'd need to "orchestrate" our LANs very carefully — optimizing assets and choosing compatible architectures.

That's precisely why "LANs: Orchestrating Your Network Assets" is the theme for this year's Network World seminar tour. (Sign up at www.nwfusion.com, DocFinder: 8229.)

During the first two weeks of November, we'll explore the topic with groups in Boston; Washington, D.C.; San Francisco and San Diego.

Joining Network World's Sandra Gittlen and me will be speakers and exhibitors

Orchestrate your LAN

from Adtran, Allot Communications, Avocent, Canon, Cisco and Foundry Networks.

As the "wrap-up" tour for the year, we'll be taking a forward-looking stance at how you can build an effective strategy for 2004. And, as an "umbrella" tour — we take a high-level, cross-technology approach — we can explore how decisions in one area, say, wireless LANs, affect your options in another area such as security.

For my part, I'll explore several areas in my morning keynote that should be able to help you deal with any and all the LAN/WAN technologies you'll need to grapple with in 2004.

My talk will be centered on what I call "the new food chain" in IT — that is, the way that technology makes its way from inception — to your doorstep.

Economic conditions have accelerated what already had been a growing trend toward outsourcing. In the past, vendors commonly would pull specialty pieces of code — SNMP, for example — from vendors that specialized in that area.

Alternatively, they would just "OEM" or relabel another vendor's product in total.

Now, we are getting something in between those two extremes.

There's a whole new pack of hardware and software vendors that make a living providing pieces to the finished product for vendors that we know and love.

These are vendors such as S3 Group or Instant802 layering features on to Intel network processors with the goal of reducing time to market and increasing box vendor profitability.

There are some vendors that serve only as designers. They decide what the product specifications are and farm out 100% of the work to others. There is a thriving business in Taiwan (and elsewhere) doing just this. And some big-name brands use this approach very successfully.

For end users, this approach provides an opportunity to understand much more about the product you are buying — if you can find out what the "components" are. The component vendors do a nice job of discussing what they offer their vendor cus-

tomers — and ultimately you.

If a product you buy is based on a particular vendor's network processor — with its own capabilities and limitations — your product automatically inherits those same attributes.

However, that doesn't mean that all products built on the same network processor, for example, are the same. That would be too easy. Network processor hardware/software vendors provide a platform upon which to develop. And, as everywhere else, they'll be some vendors that do it the right way and some that take the easy way out.

Like it or not, you can't ignore the situation. The network you are trying to architect ultimately will be built with components architected by who-knows-how-many different vendors. Understanding the lineage will give you an upper hand on building the best network.

Tolly is president of The Tolly Group, a strategic consulting and independent testing company in Boca Raton, Fla. He can be reached at ktolly@tolly.com.

Avaya

continued from page 19

made up of several modules:

- Interaction Center 6.1, which acts as the central nervous system for a call center, managing the flow of calls, e-mails and Web chat sessions coming into a contact center.
- Business Advocate, a predictive routing application that matches incoming caller ID information with existing customer call data and then routes the data to the call to the most appropriate agent.
- Interactive Response 1.2,a platform that lets call centers set up "self service" capabilities through IVR, with support for Voice XML.
- Outbound Contact Management, which can manage outbound calling activities

and includes new features for handling "do not call" lists.

• Operational Analyst 6.1, a module that lets users monitor and produce reports on call-center activity, such as tracking average call length and call-flow patterns.

Each of these modules can now run on an IBM AIX, Sun Solaris and Windows-based server platforms. Users can choose which modules they want to install and run them on one server or on separate servers in different locations. Avaya says this could let a business extend IVR to multiple call-center sites by extending the application over an IP WAN.

The software will work with Avaya Definity ACDs, and TDM- and IP-based ACD hardware from Nortel and Aspect, two of Avaya's top competitors in the call-center market. ■

A

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continued from page 19

actually can get more cost savings, and they are not outsourcing or 'de-skilling' their company in an area that they, frankly, are going to need in the future. I don't think you can find any company that has outsourced its entire IT infrastructure in the on-demand mode and been a leader in their industry.

How does Dell view on-demand technology, and how are you meeting demand for that with your customers?

We are meeting it with the standards, which say as you need more capacity you buy more thin, low-cost servers and you add capacity incrementally. The problem with on-demand is fundamentally you are buying a great big mainframe and paying for the portion you use. Someone eats the cost of that unused capacity somewhere. Basically, it's a strategy to sell big iron, because it is either going to cost the customer money or IBM money. We've seen companies go away from Sun systems because they had to buy huge capacities and fill it up over time. A much more efficient model is to buy just what you need and as you need more buy more thin servers with standard architectures that can handle all of your needs while you grow. The pay-as-you grow method is more efficient for suppliers and for customers.

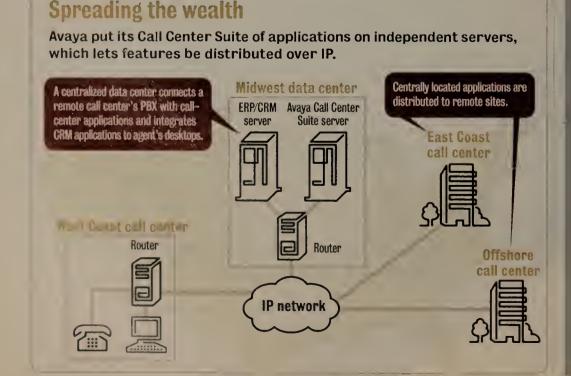
What are the factors that you look for in

markets in order to be able to enter them?

There are several things. One is the emergence of essentially a merchant component industry. You've got to start finding the movement from proprietary ownership of all the product to a merchant ownership where you can see suppliers making the molecular components that go into the product, rather than one company owning it all. The second thing we look at is a kind of umbrella profit pool, meaning a large enough profit pool that is worth collapsing, but still be profitable. Third, we have to look and see customers are requesting or suggesting that Dell participate in the marketplace so we have some customer pull on what we're going after.

Looking ahead three to five years from now, how will Dell be different as you respond to things that you're seeing in the market?

Well, we have a \$60 billion target for the company, or goal I should say, that we're about two years into a five- or six-year program. So far we're on track. That shows we would have only about 50% or less dependency on client business, and the rest would be in enterprise products, servers and storage, networking products, services and then software and peripherals, which is to a great degree printers and displays. So that is what we had envisioned.







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IP net mgmt. could get easier **■ BY DENISE DUBIE**

A new version of the Ghost computer cloning and restoration product from **Symantec** adds features that deploy software patches and reduce the network bandwidth used by the program. Announced last week, Ghost 8.0 Corporate Edition finds the software evolving from a back-up and recovery product into a configuration and patch-management platform. One new feature is remote management that lets administrators clone Microsoft, Windows NT, 2000 or XP machines and send out software hot fixes or operating system configuration changes to multiple workstations at once, Symantec says. To simplify file deployment, a new file-transfer multicasting feature allows the same file to be pushed out and run on multiple workstations at the same time. Bandwidth-throttling features let companies use the multicast feature without taking up too much of the network's available resources, the company says. Symantec also included features to limit the effect of system cloning and restoration on corporate networks. Unlike earlier versions of Ghost, Version 8.0 has the ability to create staging areas on local machines. Those enable administrators to store local copies of user profiles, software fixes or even entire "images" of the computer-operating environment, Symantec says.

■ IBM has added a version of its content management software to its Express line of products, offering smaller organizations and depart ments a tool for managing digital content such as documents and image files. DB2 Content Manager Express is available worldwide for \$9,375 per server and \$1,063 per concurrent user. The stand-alone software handles content storage and offers version and permissions controls, search, organization and workflow management features. DB2 Content Manager Express is currently only available for Windows servers, but versions supporting Linux and other operating systems are in the works.

A proposed standard under construction at the Internet Engineering Task Force promises to extract more traffic statistics from corporations' network gear, which proponents say will help them develop usage-based billing and more easily spot security breaches.

IP Flow Information Export (IPFIX), expected to be in final draft by early next year, defines a method for routers and switches to export traffic-flow data to management systems. If adopted, the export standard would be included in network gear from Cisco, Nortel, Riverstone Networks and others. IPFIX-compliant management products then would be able to collect and analyze the traffic-flow data and correlate it with other network and application performance metrics in a management console.

Proponents say IPFIX-compliant gear will capture, store and deliver all traffic-flow data that crosses corporate routers and switches. Commercial products and protocols such as SNMP today can extract part of the traffic-flow data stored on network gear, but IPFIX would automatically package the raw data and send it to a collection point for correlation. In many cases, trafficflow data can be lost on network gear because routers and switches don't have the memory to save the data. After the data is exported, management software could dissect the data, which today is difficult to gather and maintain.

"IPFIX is the foundation technology by which the raw data is transmitted between the network gear and a collector for subsequent analysis," says Dave Plonka, co-chair of the IPFIX working group for the IETF. "Flow-based measurements are a sweet spot between mere aggregate counters and complete packet traces."

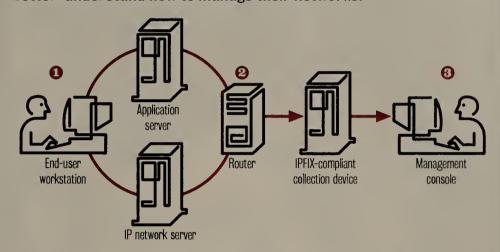
To export data, routers present network traffic flow based on seven fields: source IP address; destination IP address; source port; destination port; Layer 3 protocol type; typeof-service byte; and input logical interface. If all seven fields in two packets match, the packets belong to the same flow.

IPFIX is expected to provide the format by which IP flow data can be transferred from the gear to a management collection point. Because IPFIX implementations will include templates, customers could define multiple templates for how various data should be exported. IPFIX-enabled devices

See IPFIX, page 28

Mining routing data

IP Flow Information Export (IPFIX) proposes a standardized, more-reliable method for exporting IP traffic-flow and application-performance data from routers and switches to help companies better-understand how to manage their networks.



End-user application requests generate packets that cross an IP network. Data such as source and destination IP address. source and destination port, and Layer 3 protocol type can help network managers analyze traffic flows.

2 IPFIX-compliant equipment such as routers and switches collect and store the data based on user-defined fields built into the IPFIX template. The router will "push" the data to an IPFIXcompliant software or hardware collection device, such as management software or a network probe, before it expires on the device.

1 The data collected using IPFIX is more detailed than it is with traditional methods, proponents say, making it possible for network managers to use the data for usage billing and chargeback, traffic engineering and detecting security breaches, such as denial-of-service attacks.

Start-up takes sign-on tasks out of users' hands

BY JOHN FONTANA

Start-up software vendor Version 3 is putting a twist on single sign-on with software that lets companies ease end-user and network administrator access to applications and services and cut expensive, help desk calls for password resets.

The company's Simple Sign-On runs on top of Microsoft's Active Directory and taps into user and application data stored in the directory.Instead of users having to remember multiple passwords for the applications they access and enter those credentials into a logon screen, Simple Sign-On stores encrypted usernames and passwords, and provides end users with desktop or start menu icons that open applications.

When users want to access a network or Web-based application, they click on the icon. Simple Sign-On handles the logon in the background using an agent deployed on the desktop, and the user never sees the logon screen. The software supports automatic logon for terminal and mainframe sessions, and can be used to control administrator access to Windows servers, which means administrative passwords can be protected.

Users don't have to remember policies, such as requirements to change passwords every 30 days, and administrators can use more-complex passwords to protect access to applications. According to Meta Group, automating password administration can save a 10,000-user company \$648,000 per year.

"We use this to ease our management burden and make life easier for our students," says Ray Midgett, assistant director of telecommunications for the Charlotte

See SSO, page 18





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- 3. Automatically approving procedure.
- 4. Constantly tracking treatment.
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10/27/03

ocal and federal telecom regulators sure want to be helpful. On the federal side, the FCC is assuming the only reason anyone would want to buy a computer is to steal movies. At the same time, the FCC is trying to help incumbent carriers rid themselves of the pesky requirement to share infrastructures installed while they were legally empowered monopolies.

On the state level, regulators are trying to protect the public from confusion over different phone-service options.

Because there is no apparent benefit for normal humans in these and many other regulatory actions, the question pops to mind: What benefit do regulators provide?

In some areas it is clear to almost every-

What are regulators good for?

one that regulations and regulators are needed. Only a few people think we do not need regulations designed to protect life and health by making sure that restaurant food or prescription drugs will not kill you.

These people think the market will punish restaurants that kill their customers and that regulations are not needed. (I exaggerate only a little bit — this is exactly the argument I have heard about drug regulations.)

But in other areas, it is less clear. A lot seems to be written about the purpose of regulations — † got 5.6 million hits on Google for "purpose of regulation," but the rationale for regulations still eludes me in much of the telecom space. A number of state regulators seem to be determined to show that regulations are not only no longer needed, but are a clear and present danger to innovation.

A U.S district court stopped Minnesota — at least temporally— from trying to regulate voice-over-IP (VoIP) provider Vonage

as if it were a traditional telephone company. But regulators in California say they are not backing down from their demand that six VolP companies submit to being regulated as telephone carriers.

When I wrote recently about the Minnesota case (www.nwfusion.com, Doc-Finder: 8227), I got some reader response disagreeing with my opinion. A few felt it was reasonable to demand that VoIP providers offer services such as enhanced 911 and ensure high-quality voice. I strongly disagree. We would have no cell phones today if wireless carriers had to provide enhanced-911 functionality before they could have started to offer their service. And it's not clear that we could ever have cell phone service if the providers had to guaranțee high voice quality. Some people might complain that I'm not being fair because the E911 and quality regulations refer to the basic phone service for a home and not an add-on service like cell phones. But that argument is becoming

less true as more people decide to use a cell phone as their only phone (DocFinder: 8228). About the only clear issue to me is that of taxes. You pay taxes for phone services; you do not (yet?) pay them on instant messages, even if an instant message contains voice.

I can see a rationale for a regulator to insist that a VoIP provider be clear on what services it does offer, but I have a hard time understanding what other value regulators add. Telecom regulators are a vestige of an era of monopoly telecom carriers. They should only ensure that those monopolies do not kill their competitors, then the regulators should fade away.

Disclaimer: Harvard does not understand the concept of "fade away," so the above must be my own opinion.

Bradner is a consultant with Harvard University's University Information Systems. He can be reached at sob@sobco.com.

Fujitsu Siemens, Oracle team on middleware

BY PETER SAYER

Fujitsu Siemens Computers and Oracle plan to pool some of their software resources to help big businesses link legacy data to modern systems with Web interfaces.

The companies jointly will fund development of a software suite combining Fujitsu Siemens' openSeas middleware with Oracle Application Server 10g.

The Oracle server will replace the existing Java server in the openSeas suite, the companies announced last week at the OracleWorld conference and exhibition in Paris.

Fujitsu Siemens is Oracle's biggest reseller in Europe, according to Oracle executives. It also resells software from other vendors, including SAP, and sells its own PCs and mainframes in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Its openSeas software can be used to Web-enable applications running on Unix, OS/390, AS/400 and its own BS2000/OSD operating system for mainframes,

among other platforms.

The companies will crosslicense one another's technology and work together on marketing and sales efforts to push the platform to big-business users, he says. The companies have yet to announce pricing.

As a result of the partnership, Oracle's Java application server will replace that of Fujitsu Siemens in the openSeas suite within the next year, but Fujitsu Siemens plans to maintain its software for existing customers for at least five years, the company says.

Meanwhile, Oracle's application server will adopt software hooks offered with openSeas' Java server for linking to legacy applications, effectively merging the functionality of the two products.

Oracle and Fujitsu Siemens plan to merge the Oracle Application Server and openSeas software platforms over time, Oracle says.

Sayer is a correspondent with the IDG News Service's Paris bureau.

IPFIX

continued from page 25

then would package the data as defined and send it to IPFIX-compliant collection devices, either network management probes or a server loaded with network management software.

Mining the traffic flow and understanding more packet data could reveal details about how an application uses network devices, how routers respond to requests and which users make the most demands. That data could let network managers bill for IT services based on usage.

"Collecting raw packet data can reveal to network managers if there are different routes or links being used in ways they didn't realize or if there are better ways to route the traffic," says Paul Kohler, technical marketing engineer in the Internet Technologies Division at Cisco. He says IPFIX also could alert network managers to potential security breaches and help them fill any security holes. "It can go beyond just noticing if a link is down; it can identify flows that are the source of a problem."

Benoit Claise, a technical leader at Cisco, and Kohler are working with the IETF on the IPFIX specification, partly because its roots are in Cisco. IPFIX is based on Cisco's Netf-low Version 9 data-export protocol. (Cisco customers usually use NetFlow Version 5.) NetFlow comes with Cisco gear and can be enabled or disabled.

Customers could turn NetFlow on to collect more specific data on traffic flows and track the busiest applications. The same network managers might choose to turn NetFlow off and disable the protocol because the amount of data it across the network can bog a router down, consume bandwidth when it's transmitted and get lost when the device runs out of storage capacity.

"NetFlow collects a lot of data, and lets you look deep into the packet, but you don't know how long it will be before the network management software will ask for that data, Kohler says. "NetFlow follows a push model, and sends the data out because without a lot of memory on a switch, you can just lose that intensive data."

Yet NetFlow resides on Cisco gear and the IETF wants to develop a standard for heterogeneous networks. Like SNMP and Realtime Traffic Flow Measurement (RTFM), the IETF wants the IPFIX working group to deliver a more-efficient way to export data to management systems.

Płonka, also a member of the Network Services group in the Division of Information Technology at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, says standards such as SNMP and RTFM can be used in such a way that would deliver the same results as IPFIX. For example, SNMP polls network devices and collects management data while RTFM measures traffic flows. Those working on IPFIX say it could provide one standard out of what now is cobbled together by enterprise network managers.

"[Our] long-term goal is to move from the present five standards toward just one," says Nevil Brownlee, co-chair of the IPFIX working group for the IETF and an Internet researcher for the Cooperative Association for Internet Data Analysis at the University of California San Diego.

SSO

continued from page 25

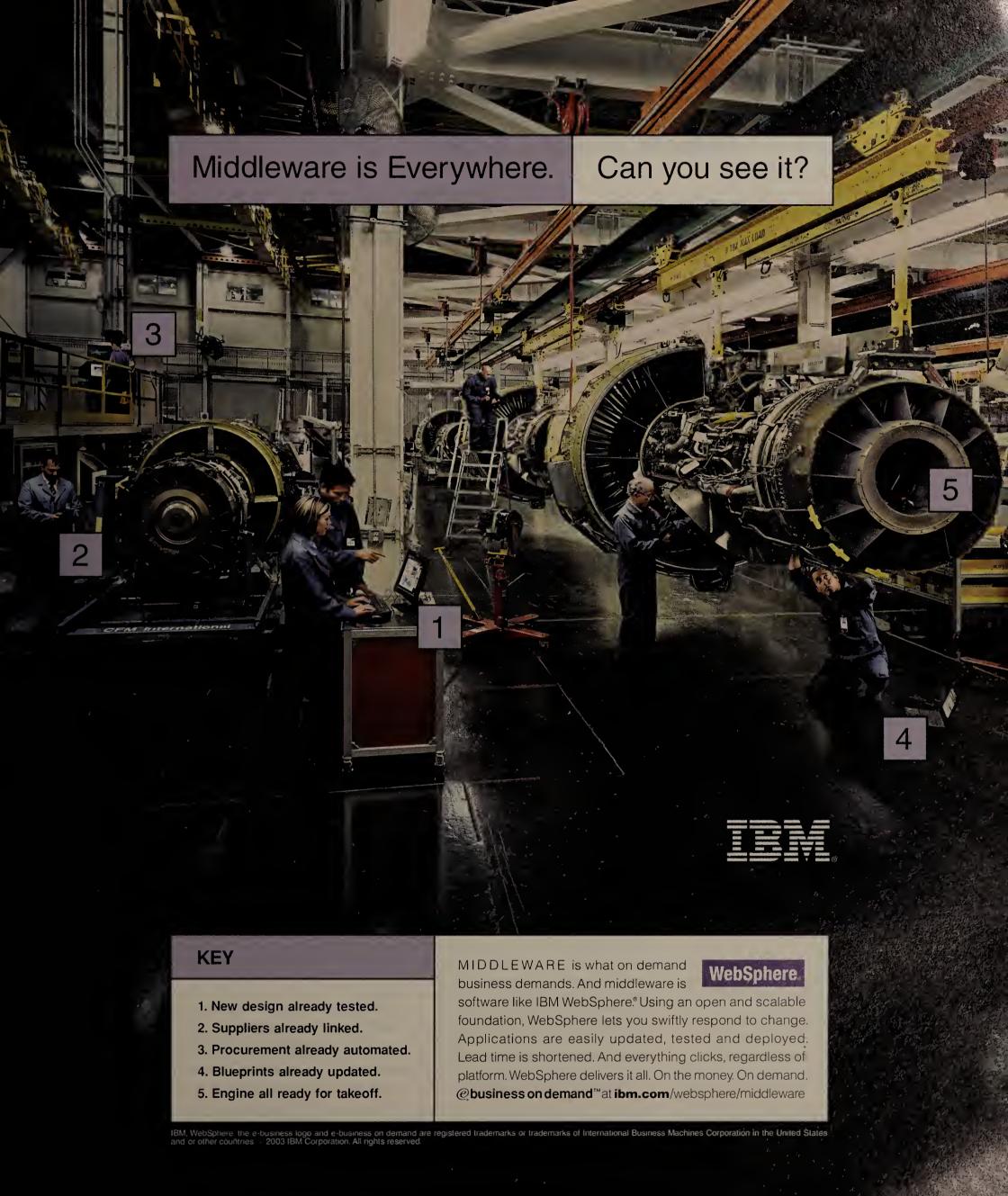
Mecklenburg Schools in Charlotte, N.C. "We have a lot of applications that require authentication, and the kids can't remember their usernames and passwords." Midgett says his staff had tried to write scripts to build shortcuts to the applications but it became a burden.

Midgett uses the Connection Management feature of Simple Sign-On to map printers and network drives for end users, a process that previously he did with logon scripts.

Simple Sign-On also has an application monitor that can automatically log out users whose machines sit idle for a certain amount of time, and includes controls to lockdown desktops to prevent access to features such as games. The software also can support the addition of a second form of authentication for application access, such as a smart card or biometrics device.

Simple Sign-On is managed through the standard Active Directory administrative console. The software includes a simple provisioning capability that permits creation of user accounts and includes a provisioning API so Simple Sign-On can plug into a full-blown provisioning application. Also included are logging and auditing tools to monitor application and content access.

Simple Sign-On, which competes with products from vendors such as Passlogix and Novell, costs \$49 per seat. ■



APPLICATIONS: Keeping junk off your network.

Web filtering packages protect and serve

BY ELLEN MESSMER

hat do pornography, shopping, watching sports, gambling and trading stocks online have in common? They're all activities available through Web sites that most businesses don't want employees indulging in. To enforce those rules, corporations are increasingly turning to Web-filtering packages that block access to forbidden sites.

A filtering product is typically installed at the Internet perimeter as a stand-alone gateway, multi-function appliance or as software added to a firewall or proxy server. Last year, companies bought \$270 million worth of Webfiltering software, up 34% from the year before, according to IDC. There are at least a dozen vendors selling this type of filtering product, with WebSense and SurfControl leading the market with about 20% share each. Third-and fourth-ranked Secure Computing and Symantec each hold about 6%.

Web filtering is attracting start-ups. Webwasher AG, a Siemens spinoff, doubled growth in two years to capture a 3% share — about 4,000 corporate customers.

The Web-filtering market is poised for growth, according to IDC, which forecasts a \$364 million market by year-end and \$893 million in 2007.

In anticipation of such a rosy scenario, mergers in the Web-filtering arena are coming at a fast clip, too. In just the past few months, Secure Computing acquired N2H2, which held about 4% of the market. Secure-messaging vendor ZixCorp bought Web-filtering vendor Elron, which has 4,600 customers, to get into Web filtering. And systems management vendor NetlQ bought content-filtering vendor Marshal Software.

Content battle

For customers, Web filtering is increasingly viewed as just part of the larger content-filtering battle that includes fighting spam, computer viruses and peer-to-peer applications that eat up bandwidth, and that cause even more trouble when left unchecked.

Some companies say one of their main reasons for filtering is to protect employees from going to Web sites where spyware, peer-to-peer applications or potentially harmful plug-ins could be downloaded.

"I hate Grokster, Gator, Hotbar and Livingwaterfall, to name a few," says Paul Grulke, director of information services at law firm Arnall Golden Gregory LLP.

The firm uses NetlQ's WebMarshal filter to try to stop unauthorized software downloads from invading the 400-employee company in Atlanta.

While no one thinks content filtering for spam or viruses is a bad idea, putting high-visibility gateway controls to use on the Web can lead to employee resentment, many administrators say. And Web filtering entails establishing a Web appropriate-use and review process that is likely to include upper management, the human resources department and the legal division working in conjunction with the IT department.

Washington Hospital has long published an appropriate-use policy for the Web after periodic reviews by its management council, which includes senior IT staff and business executives, says Bob Venable, IT director at the Freemont, Calif., hospital. Employees must sign

the hospital's acceptable-use policy, which prohibits online shopping, pornography, gambling and "personal surfing," he says.

"Only one person has unlimited access, the director of community relations, because of his work," Venable says. The hospital, which has about 1,000 employees, decided to deploy filtering to monitor and block use of the Web "because the policy was being ignored, mostly from the late-night shifts," he points out.

Once Washington Hospital set up a gateway using SurfControl's WebScout software, the unauthorized Web surfing "instantly stopped," he adds.

Charter One Bank, which has 8,000 employees, created Web-surfing policies it dubs "Internet plain," "plus" and "super" that are enforced through the corporate Surf-Control filter running on a Microsoft proxy server, says Eric Bowers, Internet security administrator at the Cleveland bank.



filtering three years ago, everyone was calling us dictators.

Eric Bowers

Internet security administrator,
Charter One Bank

Shopping sites and adult content are blocked in general, and "plus" allows sports feeds and news feeds, mainly for the marketing department. "Super" — limited to three individuals — allows unfettered Internet access.

"When we started Web filtering three years ago, everyone was calling us dictators," Bowers says.

But one good reason to block Web access is that people are hit by spammers after visiting Web sites, Bowers says, because the sites capture their e-mail address.

Unwanted consequence

But being the IT worker associated with monitoring and blocking access to the Web can bring unwanted attention inside any organization, warns Sean Geist, network engineer at New York City property management firm Rudin Management. About a year ago, Rudin Management started using WebSense to monitor and block some Web use by about 300 employees.

Geist says watching over the WebSense filtering gateway is just one thing he does in addition to maintaining the firewall, routers and switches, which few people even notice. But they quickly found out he does the Web filtering. "They got to know me as the person who blocks their access," Geist notes. "It can be an awkward position."

"It feels funny when I'm filtering my boss," Geist says.
"But he understands."

It's more difficult when fellow employees beg Geist to change the monitoring settings on the Web filter.

"People try to get me to lift the controls, and I just ask them to 'please don't shoot the messenger." On rare occasions, executives might want to know what someone is doing on the Internet, and it's his job to tell them

Geist says configuring policy settings and updating user information is simple with WebSense Enterprise 5.0 because the Web filter works with Microsoft's Active Directory, where user information is stored. Rudin Management already was using Active Directory, so this means Geist no longer has to maintain two directories, as he did with the earlier version of WebSense.

Secure Computing, a large Web-filtering software vendor, sells most of its SmartFilter software through partnerships with vendors such as Blue Coat, Cisco, Computer Associates, Network Appliance and Ositis. These vendors support SmartFilter inside their multi-purpose security appliances, firewalls or intrusion-detection products.

Multi-function gateways

Symantec recently released multi-function Gateway Security appliances that include Web filtering. Some multi-use appliances are designed to support other vendor products. The Crossbeam gateway appliance, for example, can run SmartFilter or WebSense as well as third-party anti-spam, intrusion-detection and firewall applications.

"The main attraction in using Crossbeam is that it is multi-purpose," says Jim Allen, global network manager at St. Jude Medical Center, which is filtering pornography, sports and gambling for about 3,500 employees at the Fullerton, Calif., hospital. "If you weren't using a single appliance, you could end up with a complex infrastructure for all these functions."

Paul DeBernardi, Secure Computing's director of product marketing, says some customers do buy SmartFilter and add it to Microsoft's proxy server or run it on a Linux server. SmartFilter also plugs into the Check Point firewall.

While multi-function products proliferate, vendor alliances abound in the Web filtering world as well.

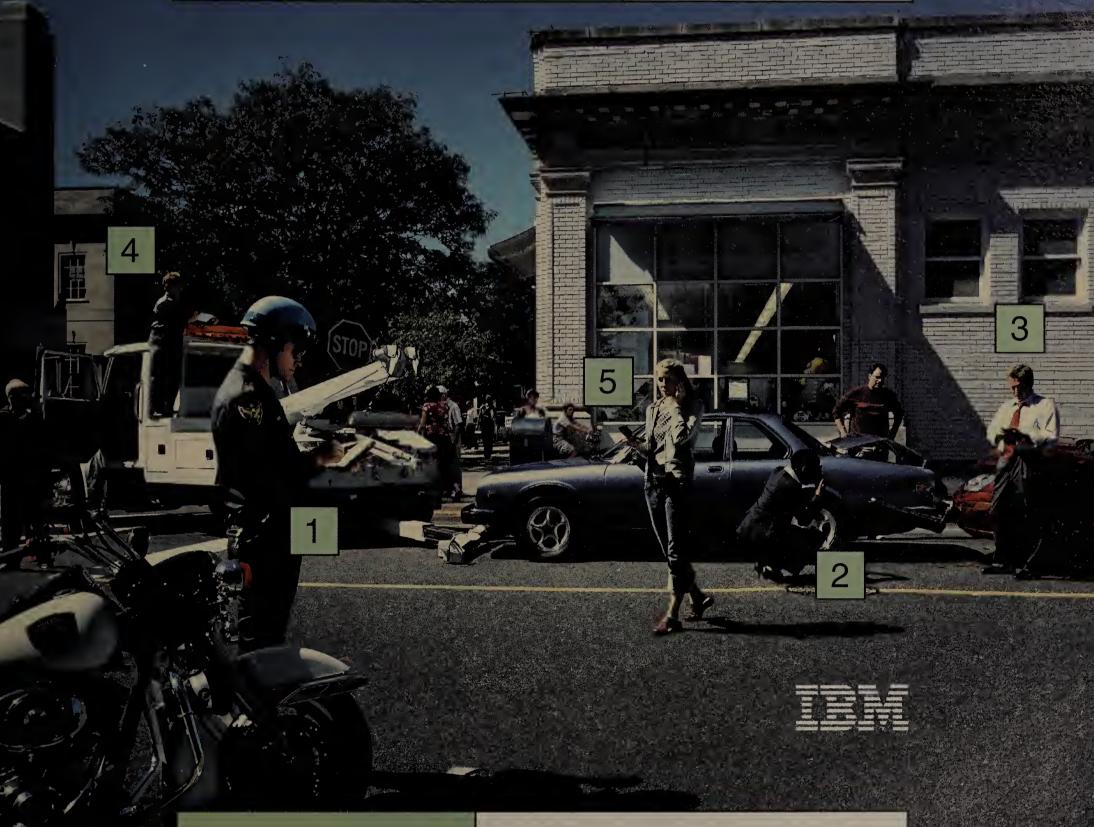
SurfControl's WebFilter software is the Web-filtering component in the Nokia security appliance. WebFilter also runs on the Check Point firewall and Novell's BorderManager. And the SurfControl filtering software can be synchronized with Microsoft Active Directory, Novell's eDirectory or a Lightweight Directory Access Protocol directory so that user information doesn't have to be maintained in a separate directory.

Jim Murphy, product marketing manager at Surf-Control, acknowledges that it is a challenge to keep up with the Web to categorize its pages into groups, such as pornography, sports or gambling, which customers might want to block. SurfControl dispatches so-called Web crawlers that skulk over the Web pages constantly to update SurfControl's content listings daily.

"There are over 5 million URLs and a billion Web pages," Murphy says. "The Web is constantly growing, so it's impossible to have everything up to date every minute."

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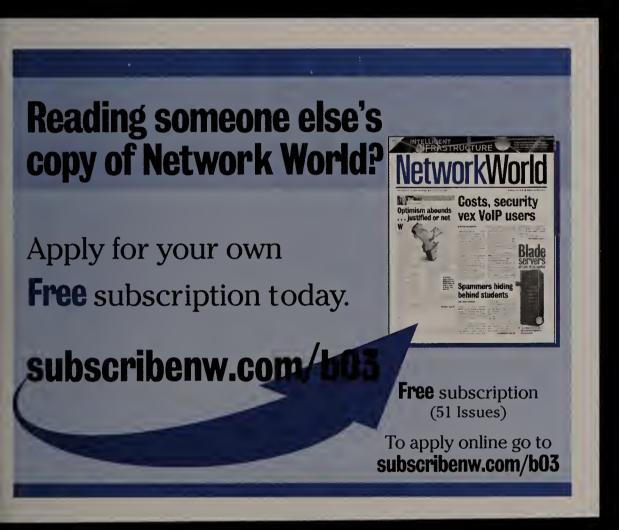
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THE INTERNET ■ EXTRANETS ■ INTEREXCHANGES AND LOCAL CARRIERS WIRELESS ■ REGULATORY AFFAIRS ■ CARRIER INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Head of AT&T business sales talks turkey

Chris Rooney was named president of business sales at AT&T in April after having joined the company in February 2002 as head of its government services division. Rooney recently met with Network World Senior Editor Denise Pappalardo to discuss contract negotiations, the competi-

tive landscape, customer satisfaction and how to increase revenue.

Customers have been saying AT&T is not offering competitive pricing until users are far into the contract-negotiating process. Isn't AT&T creating bad blood through this?

If there is one message I deliver to every field sales department it is to double our speed in all things. And it speaks to your point. We have to improve the speed with which we come to these conclusions with our customers, because that time can create dissatisfaction. When I first joined the sales team and we looked at our processes, we heard similar comments.

How is your department trying to achieve that goal?

We brought in Donna Henderson, who runs what I call the sales enablement group. Donna's job is to improve the negotiating process. She's in that position because she was running one of our sales regions in Dallas and was working with customers every day. We had to get someone in to do this job who is sensitive to customer issues and have them go through a methodical remediation process to ensure we can be more responsive to customers in this environment and be less difficult to do business with.

Has AT&T fully taken advantage of MCI's weakened position?

Our effort every day has to be full-out. I may be termed old-school, but I believe

that an organization has to function at a high-performance level all the time. That may come from my 20 years in the Marine Corps.

I come to play every morning at 7 a.m.l expect everyone here to come and play, and take advantage of every situation that is favorable. Some might deem MCI's bankruptcy as a favorable situation. But you have to be equally aware that there is RBOC entry in our market. We have to work like the dickens to overcome that.

What were your biggest challenges as you took over?

Your first challenge in any new job is to understand the environment and the people in that environment. The challenge there was to begin to know the people in the team and the types of relationships they've developed with the customers. It's a big team of about 7,500 folks across 50 states and the world.

Did that process result in a lot of change within the sales team?

I probably have the best sales department with some of the best sales leadership I've ever seen. I've been equally pleased with the relationships they've built

Some users have complained they are working with green sales folks. Are you saying there hasn't been much turnover recently?

No, there has not been a large amount of turnover. We have been trying to ensure that we build a strong relationship with each customer. We have been introducing new personnel into customer situations on a dedicated basis. This is part of a model called total account management that we introduced to look at each customer's needs.

Has AT&T changed how its salespeople are compensated since you joined?

Compensation programs are done on an annual basis, and I joined in April. You don't want to change a person's basis of compensation in the middle of the year. Going in to the next calendar year, we are absolutely committed to ensuring an alignment between the objectives of the company and the objectives of individual salespeople.

We're focused on growing revenue of our existing customer base, and we want to continue to grow with new customer acquisitions. Those objectives are aligned with the company's goals of revenue growth and profitability.

See AT&T, page 36

■ EarthLink is expanding the reach of its Small Office DSL service from 16 to 81 markets. The ISP is teaming with Covad Communications to expand its DSL reach in Baltimore; Charlotte, N.C.; Kansas City, Mo.; Minneapolis: New Orleans; Orlando; Philadelphia; Portland, Ore.; Salt Lake City; San Antonio, Texas; and San Diego. EarthLink's service offers small-office users an asymmetrical DSL service that supports 1.5M bit/ sec downstream and 384K bit/sec upstream for \$80 per month.

■ AT&T Wireless last week began selling Motorola's MPx200, the first smart phone based on Microsoft software to be sold in the U.S. The MPx200 is also the first Microsoftbased phone to be offered by a major handset maker, which analysts have said might help Microsoft establish its long-sought credibility in the mobile phone market.

Microsoft's entry onto the U.S. market comes a year after it introduced the world's first Windows Powered Smartphone in the U.K. manufactured by Taiwan's High Tech Computer Corp. Since then, Microsoft Windows Mobile phones have been introduced in several European and Asian countries.

Cisco enhances MPLS software for Layer 2

New line card lowers cost of metro Ethernet deployment.

BY JIM DUFFY

Cisco recently announced an addition to its Multi-protocol Label Switching software designed to provide a specific amount of bandwidth to any type of Layer 2 traffic destined for an IP core.

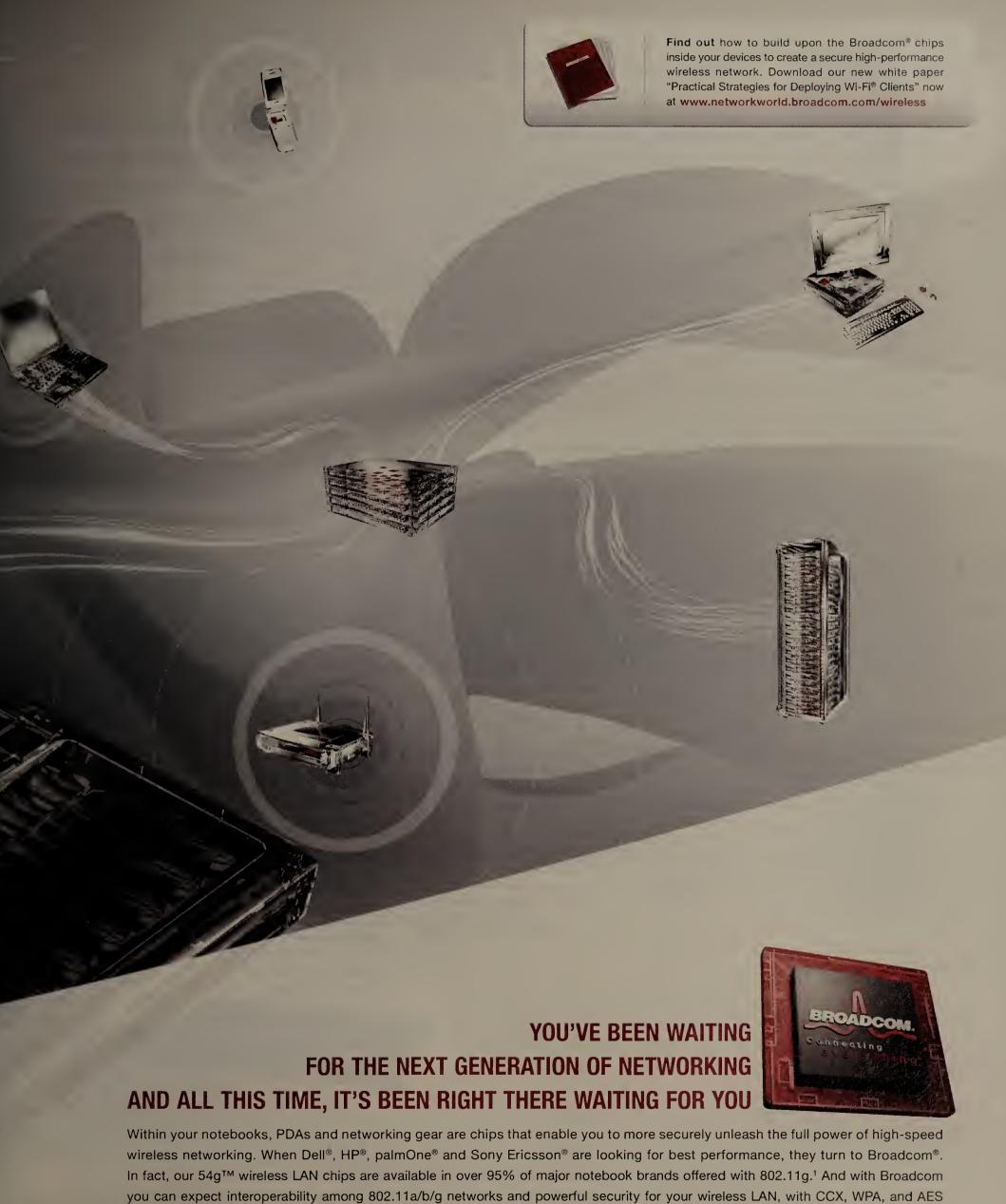
The software — called IOS MPLS Bandwidth-Assured Layer 2 Services combines the company's Any Transport over MPLS (AToM) code with MPLS traffic engineering and quality of service (QoS). This lets service providers offer managed

intranets, private voice-over-IP networks, intranet multimedia, networked commerce, 3G wireless and voice trunking services to their Layer 2 access subscriber base, Cisco says.

The software also improves MPLS Layer 2 functions to facilitate network convergence, and includes MPLS Fast Reroute for AToM circuits for enhanced resiliency, Cisco says. OoS prioritization is delivered via IP Differentiated Services bits, while MPLS traffic engineering is designed to

See Cisco, page 36





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ne of the New Year predictions made in this column was that telecom mergers and acquisitions would continue during 2003. And they have, although none have rivaled the scale of the MCI/ WorldCom deal. But consider:

Earlier this month, Internet interconnectivity provider Internap picked up two privately held, route-control vendors, netVmg and Sockeye Networks. The deals augment Internap's existing intellectual property with respect to route optimization and intelligent route control, and, of course, eliminate these vendors as competition.

In August, Gric purchased privately held Axcelerant. Gric provides secure mobility solutions for global corporations; Axcelerant offers managed VPN services.

Also this month, privately held MegaPath

This time merger activity isn't madness

Networks, which offers broadband access and managed IP network services, acquired TManage, a leading provider of managed access, VPN and security services.

Why the acquisition spree? And what's the effect on network executives?

One thing that the acquiring companies have in common is that they're not your father's telecom providers. In other words, each one has carved out a value proposition and a service niche that's markedly different from that of legacy telcos.

Internap's claim to fame is the ability to route traffic effectively and cost-effectively across the Internet, making on-the-fly decisions about which routes to choose based on the users' priorities and concerns.

Gric specializes in offering transportindependent connectivity services to remote and mobile workers (read: Wi-Fi, DSL and Ethernet).

Megapath focuses on providing broadband services to remote offices.

It's worth noting that these nontraditional telcos have not only survived the telco downturn — they've prospered.

A second noteworthy point is that they're all strategic acquisitions. That is, they all involve enhancing and deepening the acquiring company's core value proposition. I admit this statement sounds like a blinding flash of the obvious - after all, why would a company ever make an acquisition that wasn't strategic?

Too often over the past few years, we've seen "scavenger" acquisitions — one player purchasing the assets and carcass of a former competitor for pennies on the dollar. And many mergers (think MCI/WorldCom) often reflected the egos of their management teams more than any strategic plan.

Here, the acquired companies have customers and value propositions of their own, and the acquiring companies have stated publicly that they hope to retain the management teams and exploit the synergies. Whether they can execute on these promises is another question — but at least attempting to do so says something about the state of the market.

So what's the effect on IT executives? Generally positive. Customers of the

It's worth noting that nontraditional telcos have not only survived the downturn — they've prospered.

acquired companies can have increased confidence that their chosen vendors will stay in business, thanks to the additional financial strength of the merged companies. IT executives who are considering using any of the services by acquiring firms or through acquisitions will find the combined offerings stronger and more fully functional. And overall, the range of telecom choices is getting wider.

Johnson is president and chief Research officer at Nemertes Research, an independent technology research firm. She can be reached at johna@nemertes.com.

continued from page 33

What do you mean by total account management?

It's an effort to ensure we are appropriately introducing our services, managing, selling and servicing customers — from a customer-care perspective to how that user's services are installed, maintained and billed.

In a recent survey, AT&T's customer-service ranking was lower than it had. How do you address these issues?

Customer satisfaction is a very critical barometer in our business. There are a lot of surveys done by media and consulting groups, and we have our own. We bring all of those together and cross-reference them on an ongoing basis. We have a joint undertaking between the marketing sales and care departments to improve that overall satisfaction rating. Right now areas of focus in sales are around the proposal and contracting processes, and the responsiveness of our sales team. They are top of mind with me and they are top of mind with my team.

Who are AT&T's biggest competitors, the other interexchange carriers or the regional Bell operating companies?

I see them all as very worthy and very challenging competitors. RBOC entry has created a new challenger in our markets. And depending on location and size of a customer contract, the RBOCs are an equal or stronger competitor today than you might call a traditional IXC You can see that in certain market share statistics. SBC, BellSouth and Verizon are all in the business of longdistance and each has a strong position in certain markets.

We're hearing that AT&T sales reps are pushing hard to sell local services with nearly all bids. What's behind this?

We've made a great investment in local. We're in 100 major cities. We have a great local service. We offer a competitive alterplative that is very favorable for our customers and prospective customers. We want to service our customers' full needs from end to end Users only want to deal with one vendor, not five local service providers plus AT&T.1 hope we're talking with all of our customers about providing local service.

continued from page 33

better utilize bandwidth by steering traffic onto distinct network paths.

Together these technologies emulate the traditional Layer 2 ATM/frame relay infrastructure and let these services migrate to an IP/MPLS network, Cisco

Initial reviews positive

One analyst viewed Cisco's Bandwidth-Assured Layer 2 Service rollout positively.

"Cisco's solution delivers frame relay committed information rate or ATM constant bit rate type of services on IP/MPLS backbones, which is a step in the right direction for industry," says Schonhowd, senior analyst at Current Analysis, in a report on the new software. "[lt] solves the customer need to guarantee the QoS whatever access technology is used through interworking."

Cisco did not identify a customer that uses the feature now, Schonhowd notes. Although the Bandwidth-Assured Layer 2 services software helps differentiate Cisco routers from those of Avic, Juniper, Laurel and Redback, Cisco continues to charge a premium for its products, he says.

Bandwidth-Assured Layer 2 Services is shipping now in Cisco IOS Software Releases 12.0(24)S,

12.0(25)S and 12.0(26)S. The company says 200 service providers worldwide have implemented its MPLS code since 1999, with half of those having

Betting on Ethernet

Features of Cisco's new line card for the Catalyst 4500 switch:

- Designed for lower-cost metro Ethernet deployments.
- 48 bidirectional 100M bit/sec ports.
- Utilizes one strand of single-mode fiber.
- Adheres to IEEE 802.3ah "First Mile" standard.
- Supports 4500's DHCP Snooping, Dynamic ARP Inspection and IP Source Guard security features.
- Expected to be available in January for \$20,000.

over one strand of fiber, providing savings in fiber, cable management and other installation costs, as well as long-term operating expenses, Cisco says. The line card also supports the IEEE 802.3ah standard for Ethernet point-to-point and point-to-multipoint connectivity in first-mile access applications.

The Bi-Directional Fast Ethernet line card costs \$20,000 and is expected to be available in January.

Cisco also announced three security enhancements to its Catalyst 4500 Ethernet switch: Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP) Snooping; Dynamic ARP Inspection; and IP Source Guard. These features help prevent subscribers from masquerading as the network's DHCP server, router gateway and other users, Cisco says.

DHCP snooping prevents malicious and misconfigured home routers from taking

> over a service provider network's DHCP service.

source guard ties

users to their allocated IP address, and dynamic ARP inspection stops subscribers from becoming the router gateway.

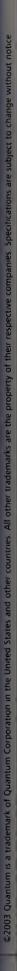


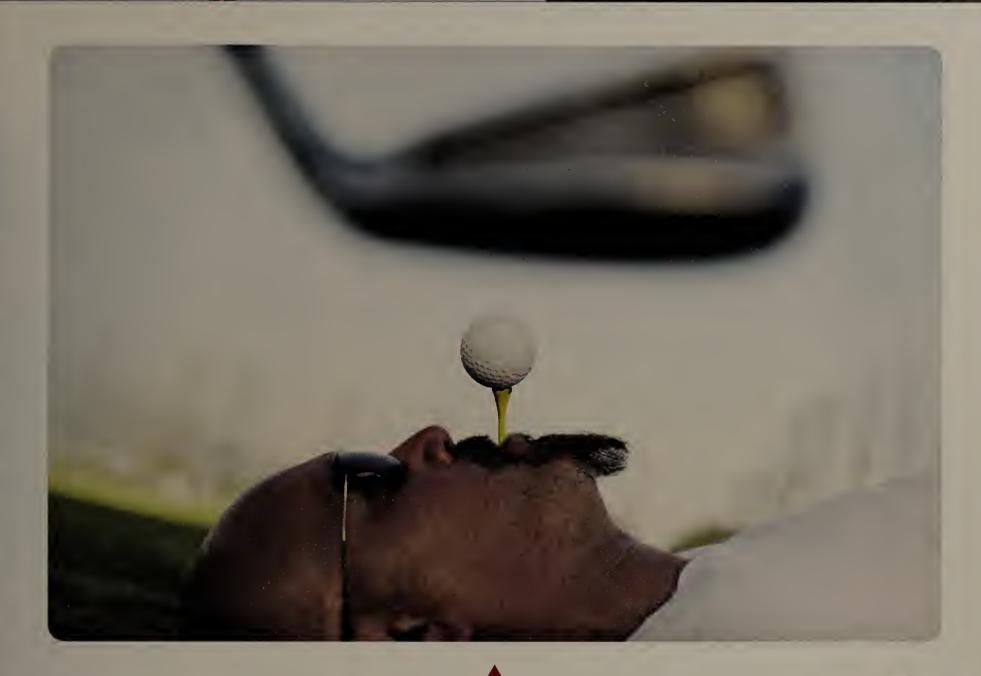
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done so only in the past year.

Cisco also unveiled a line card for its Catalyst 4500 switches that the company says lets service providers build lower-cost, fiberbased metropolitan Ethernet networks.

The Catalyst 4500-series 48-port 100Base-BX10-D Bi-Directional Fast Ethernet line card operates





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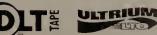
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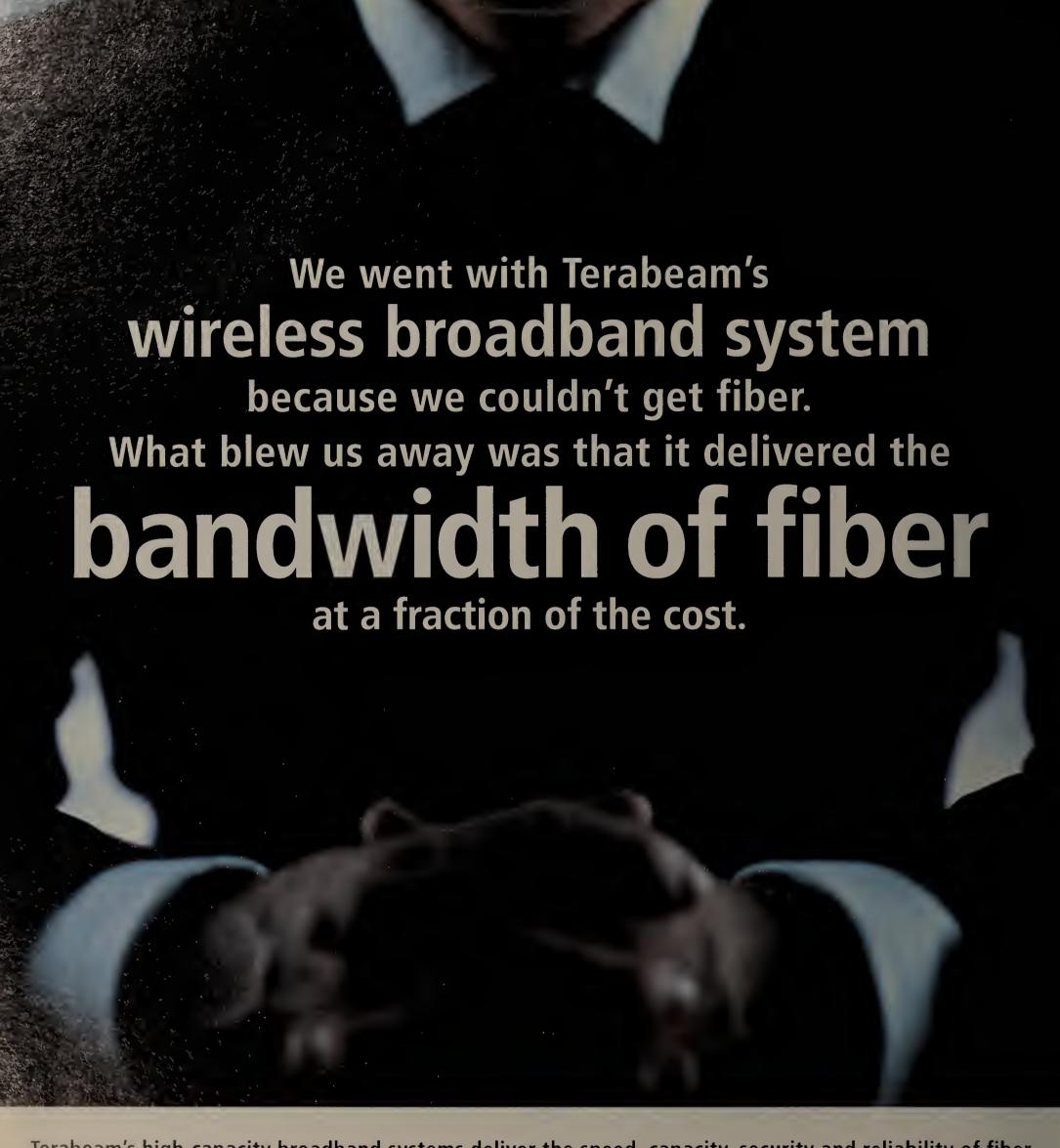


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Adventures in broadband video

Our intrepid editor tries to meet the world face-to-face.

■ BY KEITH SHAW

These days, the best thing about broadband isn't the speed — it's the cool new applications you get to run on top of it.

Take videoconferencing. Emerging products and applications make the old days of Webcams seem like black and white TV vs. color TV. Broadband's fat pipe gives you a

■ SMC Networks recently announced a wireless device that can be used as an adapter, access point or repeater. The SMC Wireless Multi-Mode device installs without drivers and supports the Wireless Distribution System protocol, which lets it extend the range of a 2.4-GHz wireless network using a point-to-point or point-tomultipoint configuration. The company says the device will be available in November and will cost \$130.

■ Cable modem and DSL services will be the key drivers for broadband growth in the small to midsize business market in the next five to 10 years, representing \$10 billion to \$15 billion in revenue, according to a new report from Pacific Research Institute and the New Millennium Research Council. "Being Served: Broadband Competition in the Small and Medium Sized Business Market" predicts 43% of very small, 49% of small and 59% of midsize businesses will increase their Internet usage in the next year.

In an effort to enable multimedia streaming on home networks, residential gateway maker 2Wire last week acquired Sugar Media, a startup developing a digital media software platform for home entertainment applications. Sugar Media's technology will give 2Wire the ability to provide its DSL service provider a platform for offering a triple play of voice, data and entertainment services. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

chance for higher resolution and increased frame rates, meaning less jitter and latency.

We spent the past few weeks trying out some of the latest gear and software aimed at the power consumer. But consumer technology also can help firms stay in touch with their remoteoffice workers.

We wanted to try a sampling of what's out there - different forms and methods of connecting mean that these are not onesize-fits-all products. Your situation and preferences might vary from ours.

For successful home videoconferencing, start with a good quality Webcam. For products that required one, we used the Logitech QuickCam Pro 4000 (\$80). The device comes with Yahoo Messenger, which includes a videoconferencing feature with its instant-messenging application. Other instant-messaging services, such as Windows Messenger, also provide videoconferencing. These applications are good, but sound and picture qualities depend on the quality of the Webcam and Internet traffic. Bottom line: If the picture is important, go with a higher-end model.

Yahoo Messenger has a SuperCam mode that lets you enhance the image quality when you're videoconferencing with one person directly rather than with several at once. However, this involves opening ports on your home gateway or router, so you'll need some network knowledge.

Apple iSight and iChat AV

We had a blast with Apple's iSight camera and iChat AV application. At test time, the iChat AV was still in beta, but it had enough great features to warrant a look. The system works only with Macintosh computers running OS X 10.2.5 or later, and a broadband connection is required.

The iSight camera is a sleek Webcam with a stylish design. It connects via a FireWire port, giving it faster transfer rates to the computer than with traditional USB cameras (although some USB 2.0 Webcams are shipping) We tested the product on the 17-inch screen of a Power-Book G4 and 12-inch PowerBook G4 notebook connected to a router and cable modem delivering 768K bit/sec downstream and 128K bit/sec upstream.

Setup and configuration was a breeze, and we were up and videoconferencing

NetworkWorld

in no time. No firewall or router configuration was necessary; the iChat AV application detected whether

the camera was operational and whether any buddies had their cameras ready. Sending an instant message to a buddy also sends a videoconferencing request pop-up message; once the recipient accepts, the connection is made. (While we could chat with PC users, we could only videoconference with iSight and iChat AV users.)

Apple gets auto-focus right. On other Web cams, we usually ended up manually configuring the focus settings, which never seemed quite right. The iSight camera does this for you. The picture was extremely clear.

You can stream video up to 30 frames per second, but we got about 13 to 15 frame/sec. A higher frame rate might eat up bandwidth on your network, so the amount of network activity could affect performance quality. The iSight camera also works with other videoconferencing applications, so we tried it with Yahoo Messenger. However, the picture quality declined somewhat.

If most of your remote workers use Macs, then look no further. However, on a mixed network, the camera will work well for the Mac users, but quality will decline a bit when they use other software to videoconference.



Apple iSight and iChat AV

Cost: \$150 for camera. IChat AV free with Mac OS X Panther; Mac OS Jaguar (10.2.5 and higher) users must pay \$30.

Pros: Outstanding quality; easy setup.

Cons: Mac-to-Mac only.



D-Link DVC-1000 i2eye

Cost: \$300.

Pros: No PC needed; big picture via TV screen; relatively easy setup and

Cons: Requires network knowledge if users are behind routers/firewalls.

D-Link i2eve

We liked the D-Link Systems DVC-1000 i2eye videophone because it doesn't require a PC — just a network with a broadband connection. The device supports both 802.11b wireless and wired Ethernet networks, although for the former you'll need to add a wireless Ethernet adapter.

Like a game console, the appliance connects to a TV through RCA jacks for video and audio. Configuration is handled onscreen via a remote control. Setup involved setting an IP address for the box (either Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol [DHCP] or static). The DVC-1000 uses an external directory server hosted by D-Link that lets users register a phone number for the device. You can pick any number, so we used our landline number. When another DVC-1000 user dials your number, your DVC-1000 rings and lets you accept the call. This procedure lets users connect to each other without knowing their devices' IP addresses.

To talk, you can connect an analog telephone to the device, which we preferred over using the microphone. But to dial, we found the remote control on the TV easier to use than the phone's keypad.

The greatest obstacle to connecting was possible router blocking — which means you might need to open ports or create demilitarized proxies to expose the device to the Web-based directory server. Sometimes we had success opening ports and connecting; other times we were baffled. Documentation on all these product is sparse at best, so problems are best handed off to technical support.

See Broadband video, pago 42

Broadband video

critinued from page 41

Picture and audio quality were excellent, as the TV screen gave us a larger picture than our PC's monitor. The manual focus ring on the device adjusted well to the amount of light in the room. There was some slight pixilation, especially when the subject moved around a lot, but for the most part we were happy with the quality.

For remote workers, this might not make the best option because they will need TVs in their offices. But it's a great "chatting with Grandma" product, if she has broadband.

Viseon VisiFone

The most professional-looking device we tested, the Viseon VisiFone is a standard office phone with an added video camera and screen. Like the D-Link DVC-1000, the

VisiFone doesn't require a PC and worked on a wired Ethernet or wireless network (with a wireless Ethernet adapter). Viseon plans to sell the phone to broadband providers as a way for them to sell enhanced services; however, you can buy it directly from the company.

Setup was pretty easy — once we connected the power and the Ethernet cable, we chose how to connect to the network. Setup occurs on the phone's video screen; when finished we had to reboot.

Some network knowledge is needed, because the device needs to know whether it gets a static IP address or one dynamically assigned from a DHCP server. The documentation, which wasn't very good, had about 12 different network setup scenarios, which was odd because the end user or IT manager should know the best way to set up the system.

With setup complete, we dialed the recipient by tapping in his IP address on the phone's keypad or by choosing the name from the device's phone book. (You need to enter names manually.)

Before the system would work, we had to tweak it several times and call tech support. The Viseon support staff was extremely helpful and quickly got us up and running.

The image quality was excellent, in part because of the small screen size. We could see and hear the caller on the other end, and video and audio synchronized nicely. There was no way to track frame rate or other statistics directly through the phone, which made it difficult to tell what we achieved. Viseon recommends using a minimum broadband connection of 256K bit/sec for upload, warning that a slower connection can produce jitter and latency. Even so, we thought our 128K bit/sec upload speeds were fine.

For home workers connecting at their desks, this might be the best option. Sufficient network knowledge and likely a call to Viseon tech support are required.



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Viseon VisiFone

Cost: \$600 direct; when offered through service providers, price varies.

Pros: No PC needed; great picture quality; great customer support.

Cons: Pricey for consumers; some network knowledge needed for setup.



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DocFinder: 8230

legnnolog AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE TECHNOLOGIES AND STANDARDS

Object storage ensures high scalability

BY GARTH GIBSON

Fueled by the computational power of Linux clusters, data-intensive applications are pushing the limits of traditional storage architectures. Whether mapping the human genome, imaging the earth's substructure to find new energy reserves, or generating the latest blockbuster animated feature, these applications require extraordinary throughput.

Object storage is an emerging architecture uniquely suited to complement Linux compute clusters.

The technology taps commodity processing, networking and storage components such as Serial ATA drives.

At the core of this new architecture are storage objects, the fundamental unit of data storage. Unlike files or blocks, which are used as the basic components in conventional architectures, an object is a combination of application (file) data and storage attributes (metadata). These attributes define, on a per-file basis: data layout and usage information; RAID level; and other information the system uses to ensure quality of service.

Object storage provides two benefits. First, it gives clients direct access to network-attached storage (NAS) devices through parallel data paths, supporting high concurrency and scalable data access. Second, it distributes file system metadata - such as file names, directories and file ownership — via a scalable, clustered metadata manager to support standard file system operations in an outof-band control path. Together, these features ensure a highly scalable storage system that can sustain high performance I/O simultaneously to hundreds of clients.

Object storage HOW IT WORKS Object-based storage architecture distributes metadata via a scalable clustered metadata manager to provide high performance and scalability. Compute-cluster clients • Clients make independent file requests of the clustered metadata manager through an out-of-band control path. Authenticated clients receive object maps and capabilities **Control** path through this same path. 3 Clients use their credentials to 8 Gigabit Ethernet switching network perform parallel direct-to-disk requests to object-storage devices (OSD) across the Gigabit Ethernet switching network. **Object** ID X123 Blocks: 3.42 Length: 128K Smart disk cluster Metadata

The objects are stored on object-based storage devices (OSD) that contain processors, memory and network interfaces, which lets them manage the local set of objects and autonomously serve data to network-attached clients.

Because these intelligent drives understand the organization and relationships of their data objects, they can exploit local processing and memory to optimize data layout and pre-fetch and cache application data. A standard OSD command set for managing and accessing these storage objects over TCP/IP has been defined and is being adopted by the ANSI T10 technical committee.

With this new storage technology, files and directories are built from objects that are physically distributed across a cluster of OSDs. Data access is granted through a metadata manager - file-system software and commodity hardware for PCs that orchestrate the interaction of the clients with the objects on the OSDs through traditional file-system semantics - Portable Operating System Interface, Network File System and Common Internet File System. The metadata manager also provides key file-system services, including authentication and access control, file locking and distributed cache consistency.

Separating file and storage metadata management overcomes the file-sharing limitations of storage-area networks (SAN) and the data-path bottleneck that is common in NAS systems. The object storage architecture is well-suited for Linux cluster computing applications. The compute cluster and the OSD storage cluster are connected through a scalable Gigabit Ethernet fabric.

Client applications running on the compute-cluster nodes make independent file-access requests of the metadata manager. The metadata manager returns an object map (a set of object IDs and the OSDs on which they reside) that the client caches and uses to access data objects stored on the OSDs. Once the client has obtained the map, all subsequent file activity occurs directly between the client and the OSDs.

Object storage architecture allows for storage systems that extend the traditional sharing and management features of NAS systems and the resource consolidation and scalability of SAN systems. This combination of performance, scalability, manageability and security only could be achieved by creating an entirely new paradigm in storage architectures.

Gibson is co-founder and CTO of Panasas. He can be reached at garth@ panasas.com.

Ask Dr. Internet By Steve Blass

Where can I find a Bayesian spam filter that will run on our Windows and Linux workstations?

Popfile is a free Naive-Bayesian spam filter available at popfile.sourceforge.net. It is written in Perl to work with POP3 mail clients, and runs as a POP proxy on your workstation. After installing the software you change the POP server settings in your mail client to use the Popfile proxy, which then handles the communications with your POP server. No changes to the outbound Simple Mail

Transfer Protocol server settings are required. The Windows version comes with everything it needs to run bundled in a Windows installation package, and instructions for using it with Outlook and Exchange Server are provided. A Web browser interface lets you configure, manage and train the Bayesian mail filter. Popfile supports multiple accounts, and it can be used with multiple e-mail clients on one machine or on a gateway server for a network. Mail also can be read through the Popfile browser interface. When you install Popfile,

you teach it the difference between the mail categories you establish, called buckets, by classifying a number of messages by hand through the browser interface. After that, you only have to reclassify errors. Initially, I hand-classified 40 messages, and have had to reclassify less than a dozen out of more than 1,000 messages since.

Blass is a network architect at Change@Work in Houston. He can be reached at dr.internation changeatwork.com

Gibbs



ome months ago in a Backspin column (www.nwfusion.com, DocFinder: 8231) Gibbs mentioned an application that he really liked called MindManager 2002 from MindJet, which he had discussed in detail in his Network World Web Applications newsletter (Doc-Finder: 8232). Well, MindJet has just released a new and significantly upgraded version called MindManager X5 Pro that has impressed us.

But before we discuss MindManager we should explain the background of this software. It is all about a technique called mind mapping that is used for gathering and organizing your thoughts on a subject. Mind maps were invented in the 1970s by Tony Buzan, who went on to build a business around the technique (details available at DocFinder: 8233).

Buzan realized that trying to organize thinking in a linear fashion (such as a list of notes) is not as effective as a free-form web of associations and that text is not as effec-

Mind that mind map!

tive as a picture in aiding recall of an idea (the old "a picture is worth a thousand words" idea).

With mind mapping, you begin with your central idea, say, building a better mousetrap. Starting in the middle of a blank sheet of paper you draw a bubble with "Better Mousetrap" in it. Then you draw more bubbles linked by lines to that central bubble, each bubble a connected idea such as "Technology," "Manufacturing," "Marketing," "Sales" and "Support."

Then you focus on each of the secondary bubbles and surround them with tertiary ideas and so on. Sometimes you'll find two or more ideas (or nodes) on different branches that are somehow related so you can connect them with a line. Check out Buzan's how-to story online at DocFinder: 8234.

Thoughts as diagrams

What you've got at the end of the exercise is a breakdown of your thinking about that subject — in our example, an entire business plan for the better mousetrap. And if you are planning to write about the subject you could translate the mind map into a hierarchical outline or, alternatively, if the map is your notes for a meeting, you might just leave it as is.

Well, such a concept just cries out for translation into software and several outfits have done just that. While we have played with most of the products available, MindManager (more information at Doc-Finder: 8235) is the best of the lot, and the latest release, MindManager X5 Pro, adds even more to an already powerful product.

For a start, of all the competition Mind-Manager is the most sophisticated in terms of the flexibility and quality of the graphics it produces. The output of many of the other products is somewhat unpolished (and in some cases downright ugly), whereas MindManager's results look good, and you can tune and tweak the look of your mind maps to a fantastic degree.

You can attach symbols to any node to indicate function or priority, as well as task information and export your maps in Microsoft Project Exchange (MPX) format. MindManager X5 Pro also offers Map Parts nodes that can read RSS news feeds; submit and retrieve Google queries; list files and subdirectories; and link to Outlook to retrieve tasks, contacts, appointments and notes. Map Part data gets embedded in the map and can be updated automatically or whenever required.

This integration of live data sources in a structured outline is a novel idea. It could

Addonic's MFR is a disc

drive with memory card

reader capabilities.

be very useful, for example, to generate reports by pulling data from Web searches and services and Microsoft Office documents, and then exporting the results back to Office documents for formatting and distribution or to HTML for Web service deployment.

You also can output maps to a printer or a PDF-formatted file or you can save them in native MindManager format as bitmaps or Portable Network Graphics (PNG) images, PowerPoint presentations, Word documents, HTML (both graphical version of maps and hierarchical page versions can be output) or XML files. MindManager also lets you create and execute macros using Windows Visual Basic for Applications so the possibilities for integration with other resources, servers and services using macros with PNG, HTML and XML input and output are intriguing.

But under all the fancy features (and we've not covered everything) MindManager's basic functionality is a terrific way to develop ideas and projects, and there's nothing quite like it. MindManager X5 Pro costs \$299, and MindManager X5, which doesn't have XML extensibility, costs \$199.

Map your thoughts to gearhead@ gibbs.com.



on high-tech toys By Keith Shaw

the Pocket Digital

New pocket camera from Logitech

Logitech has updated its Pocket Digital camera by adding a built-in strobe flash and offering 1.3-megapixel resolution. The credit-card-size camera is small enough to fit into a shirt pocket and weighs 3.6 ounces and

The Pocket Digital 130 includes 16M bytes of internal memory, which holds about 45 pictures in 1.3-megapixel resolution, or about 130 pictures in VGA (640-by-480-pixel) resolution. The built-in lithium ion battery

can be recharged through the camera's USB cable. Another cool feature is that Windows XP and Mac OS X users can connect the camera to a computer and see the pictures on the device without having to downlead the Logitech software. This is possible because the cainera acts as a USB storage device A user pulls the frame of the camera to reveal the lens and turn on the camera, pictures is and pusies the frame to turn a breeze with the camera oft.

One device to rule them all

Taking convergence to its logical next step, Addonics last week launched a device that seems to do almost everything except slice a tomato. The Addonics 16-in-1 Multifunction Recorder (MFR) combines an 8-in-1 Flash memory reader and writer with a DVD player, CD burner and standalone MP3 player. The MFR is scheduled to be available on Nov. 1 priced at about \$250, the company says.

The device connects via USB 2.0, and has S-Video and audio/video output ports that let you connect to a TV for DVD movie output (you also can connect to a digital projector). It lets you read and write from most Flash memory formats, and you can convert Flash media onto a CD-RW disc by pushing a button, Addonics

The device weighs 1.4 pounds (with the battery) and supports Windows 98 SE systems and above. More details are available at www.shopaddonics.com.

Make a DVD in about 10 minutes

Sony last week announced two new DVD drives that 8x-speed

> DVD+R recording. The company says the drives can burn a full DVD in about 10 minutes. The internal DRU-530A (\$270, available in December) and external DRX-530UL (\$350, available in January) drives also support up to 4x-speed DVD+RW and DVD-R recording and 2x-speed DVD-RW, 40x CD-R and 24x CD-RW

More information, plus a tutorial on how to convert your VHS tapes to DVD, is available at www.sony.com/dvdburners.

Toshiba notebook has notes organizer

Toshiba's digital products division last week launched the Satellite M30/35 series of notebooks, which include a 15.4-inch widescreen display, built-in wireless LAN connectivity and the new Microsoft Office OneNote 2003 digital note-taking application.

> organize, share and use notes more effectively, to help users become more productive, Toshiba says.An additional option for the notebook is the Microsoft Office Small Business Edition 2003.

The OneNote 2003 application

aims to capture,

The 6-pound notebook starts at about \$1,650, and includes a 1.4-GHz Intel Pentium M processor, Windows XP Home or Professional, up

to 60G bytes of hard-drive space, up to 512M bytes of DDR SDRAM, Harman/Kardon stereo speakers, an IEEE 1394 port, three USB 2.0 ports, integrated V.92 modem, integrated 10/100 Ethernet and a DVD/CD-RW combination drive. More details are available at www. shoptoshiba.com.

Toshiba also announced five other notebooks that all include built-in 802.11g wireless connectivity — the Satellite A10-S169 (about \$1,200), the A35-S159 (about \$1,400), the P10-S429 (about \$1,600), P15-S409 (about \$1,900) and the P25-S509 (about \$2,200).

Shaw can be reached at kshaw@nww.com.



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EDITORIAL
John Dix

IDS has a role when done right

hen last we discussed the relative worth of intrusion-detection systems on this page (see www. nwfusion.com, DocFinder: 8236) we said we would reserve judgment pending our second review of the products.

At the time, Gartner was creating a flap by saying IDS systems are a waste of money because they flood users with false positives, a conclusion we had reached in our first test of IDS products in November 2002 (DocFinder: 8237).

Now that we've published our second review of IDS products (see DocFinder: 8238), we're ready to weigh in on the debate about whether IDS systems are worthwhile: Yes, but ... IDSs still generate too many false positives, and they are not for everyone. But if you know what you're doing and have realistic expectations they add value.

On the false-positive front, Network World Test Alliance member Joel Snyder, a senior partner at Opus One in Tucson, Ariz., says the systems in this latest test generated gigabytes of alerts over the two-month test period. There were times when they were spitting out 100,000 alerts per day.

That said, the products did offer better tools to handle the flood. "With flexible grouping and display options, and automated upgrade and downgrade of alert information, we could make our way through the thousands of alerts we got each day," Snyder says.

But he qualifies that as only a baby step forward. "They are better than they used to be, but only slightly. You can't use IDS to alert you to when something bad is happening because you simply get too many alerts for that," he says. "But IDS is good for forensics, finding the details when you know something bad has happened."

For example, if you see a server disk has filled up with Metallica songs, you can use IDS to paw through the relative information to identify how the cretins reached the server and then go plug that rat hole, Snyder says.

But, he points out, you need employees devoted to security to get the most out of these systems, and you need detailed security policies and network knowledge for IDSs to make a difference. Said another way: These systems are for more-sophisticated shops.

So while Gartner is ready to write off IDS products as useless, we think they can play a meaningful role in larger networks when implemented and used correctly IDS won't help you recognize an attack, but when there has been a breach they can be real timesavers.

— John Dix Editor in chief jdix@nww.com

opinions!

Consider coaxial cable

Regarding your story "Cutting 10G costs with copper" (www.nwfusion.com,DocFinder: 8223): Twisted copper pair is a poor medium for high frequencies because of the increasing radiation and power loss. Why not use coaxial cable, which is not expensive? You avoid radiation, and you can go out to a mile or so with 100-GHz bandwidth. You could use very small coaxial cables for short distances. They could be as small as twisted pairs and easily cabled together. These are all standard techniques, except for very small sizes. We seem to think we have to jump from twisted pair to fiber optics and ignore the huge frequency span of coaxial cable.

Frank Johnson Beulah, Mich.

DSL not mission critical

Regarding "DSL Forum targets business services" (DocFinder: 8224): I question the positioning of DSL as a viable mission-critical option. While data quality of service is a great selling point to businesses that cannot afford T-1 access, without the tariff on the loop (such as in true T-1 service) I don't think DSL should in any way be positioned as mission critical. Without tariffs to dictate repair response time by the telephone company, DSL loop failures still will be an issue. Increased bandwidth and better data throughput are wonderful, but if the line is down for three days because of a loop problem, the client doesn't have the uptime required for a mission-critical solution.

Russell Benoit Commercial account manager Meganet Communications Fall River, Mass.

E-mail letters to jdix@nww.com or send them to John Dix, editor in chief, Network World, 118 Turnpike Road, Southborough, MA 01772. Please include phone number and address for verification.

Live is best

Regarding Kevin Tolly's column "Testing anti-spam products can be done" (DocFinder: 8225): My organization tested anti-spam products with a "live" email stream. There was a Unix host that we decommissioned months ago. I reinstated its DNS name, knowing that spammers likely would still be sending to it. (Even legitimate, but poorly managed, mailing lists were still e-mailing to it.) That decommissioned host's name was reassigned to each anti-spam product to evaluate each one. "Live" streams are best if you can arrange for it.

Craig Paul Lawrence, Kan.

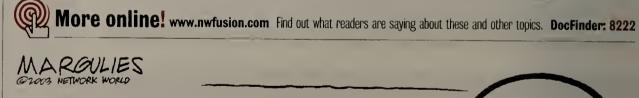
Tolly responds: I agree; live is best. We needed to be able to run the same test across many products over multiple weeks. So we collected a live feed, logged it to a database and worked from it. The trade-off, of course, was that it wasn't "fresh" anymore — but at least we could see how different products responded to the same stream.

Subtract this ad

Regarding Mark Gibbs' comparing the Internet to the telephone company in his Backspin column "The 'Net up for grabs" (DocFinder: 8226): For a while my phone company did just what Gibbs suggests, delivering an advertisement in response to a busy signal. Every time 1 got a busy signal, I would immediately get a sales pitch offering, for a certain sum of money, to redial until connected.

I can only speculate as to why my phone company stopped offering this service. Perhaps some regulatory body stepped in, or unhappy customers complained, or maybe it just didn't yield the cash flow they had hoped.

> Glen McFarland Oroville, Calif.









THROUGH CHANNELS

Ken Presti

few months ago, I got back into fencing to get some exercise and, I hope, cheat middle age for a little while longer. Having already enjoyed the sport during my college days, I dug my old equipment out of the garage and joined a nearby fencing club, recalling that after a hard day's work there's

something therapeutic about going after someone with a saber knowing that both parties will wake up with everything intact the

The old gear worked fine until last week, when a small chunk fell out of my mask during an especially spirited bout. The damage didn't look all that threatening. But when the coach realized I was using a mask older than some of my opponents, he explained that the device that protects my face from permanent disfigurement might not be a good place to save a few bucks. Because small holes often beget larger holes, I bought a new mask.

The experience brought to mind a range of strategies people use to save money — and sometimes put at risk, or outright surrender, things that are far more valuable than the actual savings. Case in point: users' relationships with integrators and value-added resellers (VAR).

Given the high levels of competition in this area, IT managers often play one channel partner against another to get low upfront bids for projects that a few years ago would have been more costly. This often results in integrators and VARs poaching clients from one another after a competitor has invested substantial time and energy in the design phase. While this might look like a wonderful way for IT managers to

Cut-rate integration: The downside

reduce expenses, it carries long-range costs that should be factored into the equation.

First, the integrator that just lost the deal lost more than revenue potential; it lost real dollars associated with the upfront costs of the pre-sales efforts. Second, the poacher is often working with a lowercost model that was secured by cutting expenses such as training, certification and support capabilities that could well be crucial to you over the long haul.

Another strategy involves negotiating the deal past the partner's obvious threshold of pain. With competent people on both sides of the table, this is less likely to happen, but when a negotiator is inexperienced or has an emotional need to close a deal, strange things can happen.

The bad news is that when the emotional need to close a deal has been fulfilled, the buyer's wonderfully advantageous deal turns into a very low-margin support burden in the eyes of the channel partner. If the client who comes in after you is nowhere near as good a negotiator and yields a better margin for the channel partner, which client do you think the partner will take care of first when you both need help?

I'm not saying that negotiation and cost-control are bad. But success hinges more substantially on a long-term approach to all facets of business, including partnering. The win-win concept rules here because short-term advantages are sometimes just too costly when you look at their long-term impacts.

Presti is research director of IDC's Network Channels and Alliances service. He can be reached at kpresti@idc.com.

... success hinges more substantially on a long-term approach to all facets of business, including partnering.



REALITY CHECK

Thomas Nolle

arly this year, a CIO received complaints from end users at corporate head-quarters about the performance of some key applications. A review by the network operations group showed that LAN traffic had been mounting for about four months, reaching a level nearly double the previous

norm. Internet traffic also had increased significantly.

It took several weeks to configure management tools to uncover the problem, which turned out to be a group of workers downloading songs and videos and burning them onto CD-ROMs and DVDs. The workers even set up an internal peer-network sharing system to distribute their finds to others. This activity accounted for 25% of headquarters LAN traffic and one-third of Internet traffic during some periods. At no time were more than 20 employees involved, in a facility that housed more than 500 workers, but it was enough to cripple some applications.

Most employers are more concerned about the loss of worker productivity in personal Web use than the traffic that use generates. In 2000, only about 10% of companies told me they believed workers' personal Internet use affected their networks, and none indicated that this traffic caused application problems. In 2003, I estimate that about onequarter of all corporate networks are affected by recreational Web surfing, with the fastest-growing source of traffic the downloading of songs and movies. If store-for-play video becomes widely distributed on the Internet, companies could face downloads of gigabytes of material from each viewer and a run on DVD media to store the files. The effect on network performance could be staggering.

The content craze has reignited the old debates on how to deal with workers who'd rather play games, surf the Web or download content than do their job. "Theft of time," as some personnel directors call these diversions, is usually a subject of a company policy, but content downloading presents a special problem because the worker often starts a download and then goes on with the job. The network is affected, but

Content craze threatens net performance

not worker performance. Restricting access to the Internet for some or all workers has been only moderately effective in stemming the problem, according to most users with whom I've spoken. This occurs because Internet use is a requirement for more types of jobs today than even three years ago.

Probably the best way to deal with content-induced network performance problems is careful traffic monitoring and analysis. Many network management systems and network performance monitors can provide per-client traffic histograms that can help spot sharp increases in network use. The reports can be routed to line department management, who can then determine if there's a work-related reason for the inquiry. If there isn't, an interview with the employee is indicated. All of this can be done without actively snooping on employee traffic. Worker rights vary from state to state, but it's bad policy to presume guilt.

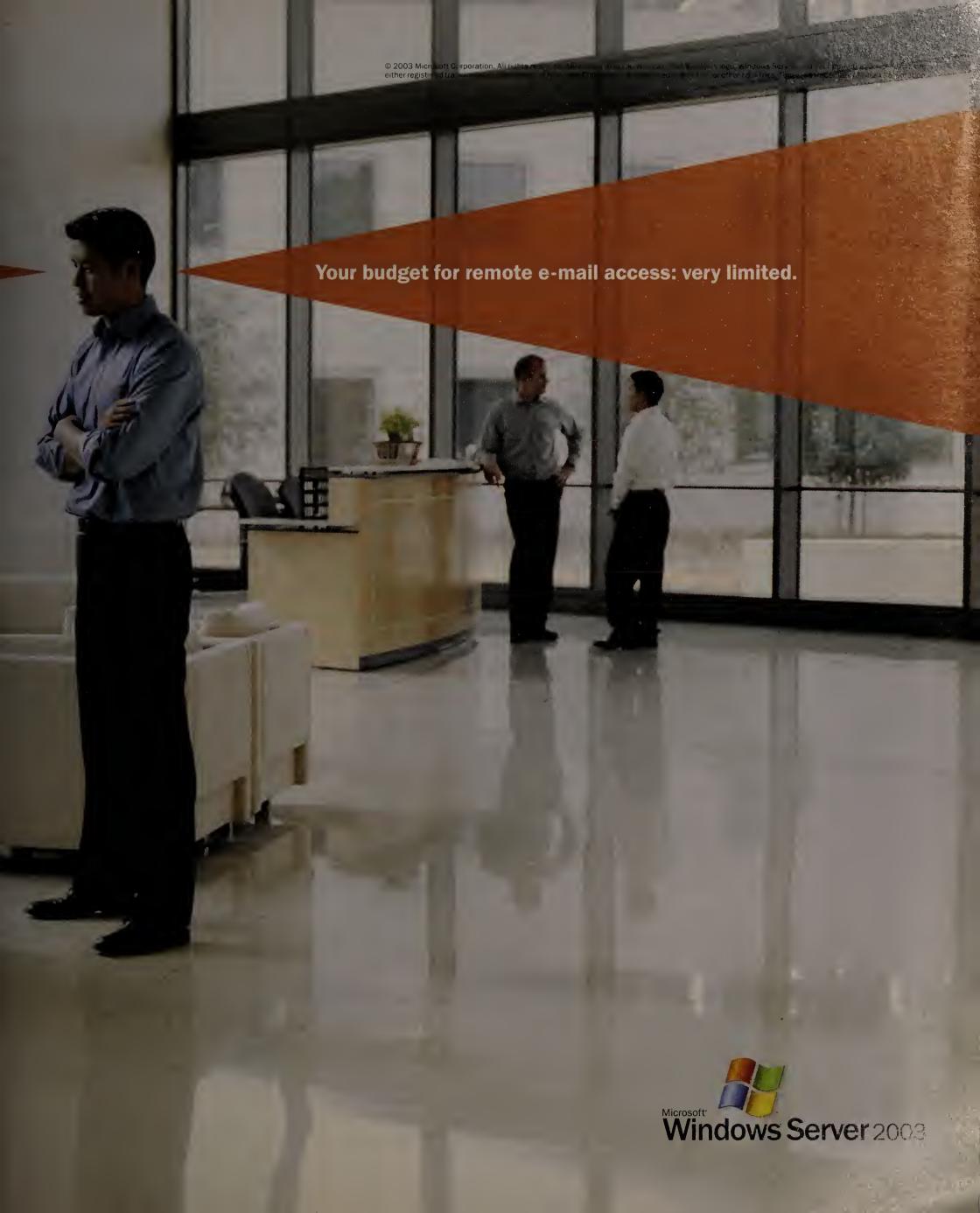
Speaking of rights, there could be more at stake than network performance. Software vendors and industry associations are taking legal action against companies that promote or condone illegal copying of software. In addition, recent actions by organizations such as the Recording Industry Association of America make it clear that the music and movie industries aren't going to take "sharing" of copyrighted material lying down. Companies without a reasonable policy to prevent employees from copying movies or music might end up being sued.

"Reasonable policy" is the key here. Employers should establish firm rules for what can and cannot be done at work, and then use network traffic monitoring to help identify who might be breaking the rules. Take steps to curtail content downloading on an individual case basis, when traffic patterns make it clear that something is happening. It takes time to publish a new policy and educate workers. Start now, and save a lot of headaches when content delivery becomes widespread which is likely to happen in 2004.

Nolle is president of CIMI, a technology assessment firm in Voorhees, N.J. He can be reached at (856) 753-0004 or tnolle@cirnicorp.com.

Employers should establish firm rules for what can and cannot be done at work, and then use network traffic monitoring . . .





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IT execs are loading enterprise business applications onto those cool little gadgets.

Mobile grows up

BY STEVE ULFELDER

Matt Norce has watched mobile computing evolve. Four years ago, Norce, network administrator at J.C. Ehrlich, a Reading, Pa., pest-control company with 42 offices in five states, began giving mobile workers PDAs from HP.

He used synchronization software from Extended Systems to load appointment information and driving directions on the devices. But the 120 exterminators in the pilot project quickly asked for more functionality. "People start out with basic [personal information management] applications. Then they see the potential of the software and they want to do enterprise apps too," Norce says.

As a result, the pest-control company has added CRM and e-mail to its mobile arsenal. Working with Weidenhammer Systems, a Reading development firm, J.C. Ehrlich's team built a CRM application specifically for PDAs, avoiding many of the headaches that businesses face when they try to squeeze an enterprise application onto mobile devices.

The pilot program is being extended to all of J.C. Ehrlich's exterminators. On the hardware side, the HPs were replaced a while back with NEC MobilePros, "which are still our No. 1 unit," Norce says. And the company is rolling out newer NEC models that run Microsoft's Pocket PC operating system.

According to Gartner, 55% of large companies plan to move their pilot mobile applications into production this year. The primary reason is competitive pressure; with customers and trading partners growing more demanding about speed and quality of service, large businesses need to get useful data out to their mobile workers.

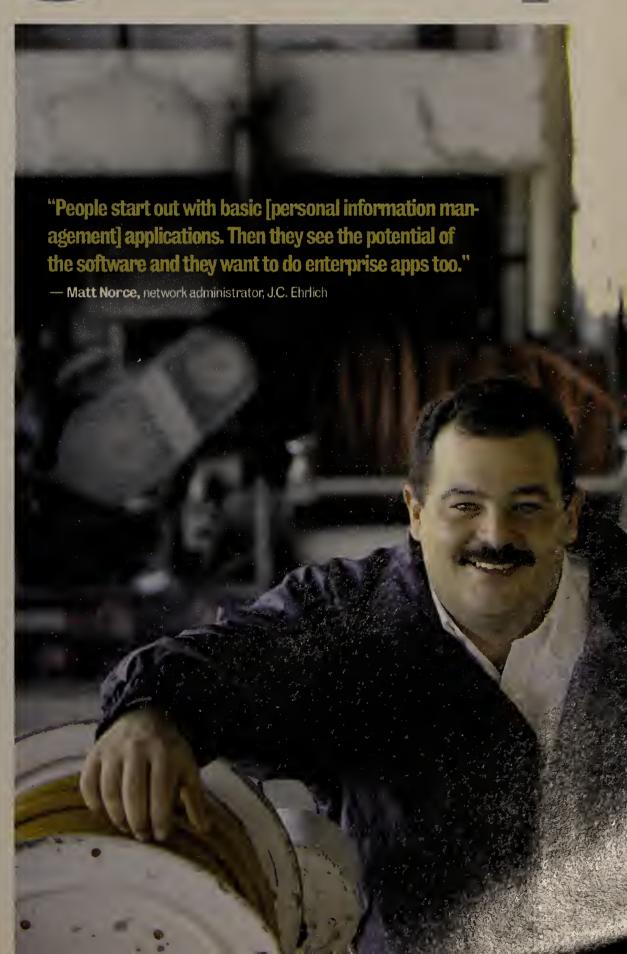
But only 25% of mobile application deployments will succeed this year, according to Gartner. The research firm says "social factors" — such as the introduction of wireless technology to workers who aren't ready for it — and bad architectural choices will be the major problems.

The good news is that mobile applications have matured enough so that a body of best practices has taken hold. Tips from analysts and businesses can help you learn from other IT organizations' pain.

Find third-party help

Pitney Bowes rethought its mobility program when the Stamford, Conn., mail and document-management giant undertook a sweeping reorganization. A division of the company had equipped its field service agents with handheld devices long ago. But "it was a proprietary system designed to look inward," says Ralph Nichols, Pitney Bowes' service program manager for document-messaging technologies. The system had other flaws too; it was a batch system relying on data that might be up to two weeks old, and most input and output was in code rather than text, "so until you intimately knew the codes, the information in the machine didn't have a lot of value," he adds.

The primary product sold and serviced by Nichols' division is Console Inserter, which is used by corporations with high mailing volumes to insert documents such as credit-card statements and utility bills in envelopes. A console inserter is a complex machine with many



Technology INSIDER

mechanical, electronic and software components.

Two years ago, Pitney Bowes standardized on Siebel Systems as its CRM and field-service application provider. But Siebel lacked wireless capability. For that, Pitney Bowes turned to Antenna Software, which offers a product called Antenna A3 for Siebel Field Service.

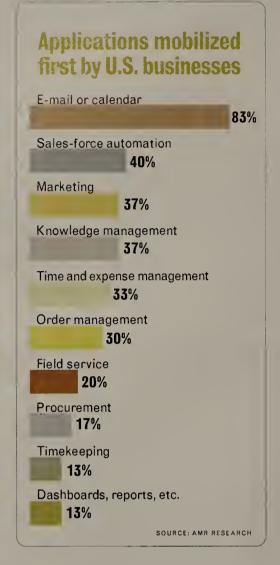
Antenna calls its underlying system A3 Mobile Foundation. The XML-based system supports diverse networks and carriers (including Code Division Multiple Access, General Packet Radio Service and two-way paging) and optimizes data transport accordingly, the company says. When Pitney Bowes technicians are out of network reach, the system stores their data input, then forwards it when they regain network access.

Futureproof your investment

Vendors of enterprise software and handheld devices are trying to make it easier to mobilize industrial-strength applications. Some are using a partner strategy, such as Siebel's with Antenna. But some analysts believe that in the next two years, most chores now handled by wireless application gateway companies will be folded into enterprise applications.

"Today, there are a lot of small vendors" in the gateway business, says Nick Jones, an analyst with Gartner. "Most will not survive in the long term. The functionality will get sucked into larger apps. Oracle, IBM's WebSphere, SAP, Microsoft — they've all got some [wireless] functionality already, and that trend will continue, with wireless application gateways becoming part of the larger portal server software"

Hardware vendors have gotten in on the act as well. In June, Research In Mo-



tion (RIM) updated the development environment for its popular BlackBerry devices, adding extensions making it easier to integrate CRM and other enterprise applications with BlackBerry's existing functionality.

Dave Werezak, vice president of marketing at RIM, says that when customers seek to mobilize software, "We work with Siebel, or SAP, and so on, and depending on the nature of the app, help establish the connectivity on the server side."

Pick the right app

Dennis Gaughan, an analyst at AMR Research, says corporate mobile deployments have tended to fizzle because they lack a persuasive business case. "This stuff is not for the faint of heart, so the application should offer significant return on investment," he says. "The problem is, most companies pick e-mail as their first [mobile] app, and it's hard to develop a business case for that. So people deploy wireless e-mail to a select group of executives — and that's where it stays."

According to an AMR report, "83% of companies report that their first mobile project — and often their last — is wireless e-mail access, which they choose ... because it is an unambiguous application that is already widely adopted."

Despite this allure, e-mail usually turns out to be useless as a test bed for other mobile applications, says Gaughan, who co-authored the report. The cost is high (\$40 per month per user at some large businesses) and its benefits are almost impossible to quantify — not exactly a convincing formula for a pilot project.

You're most likely to show positive results (and persuade senior management that mobility is a worthwhile investment) if you select applications that directly affect your ability to serve customers, AMR found. This is why salesforce automation and field service are both popular choices (see graphic, left).

In the first year, Pitney Bowes equipped its field service engineers with handhelds running a Siebel/Antenna application — inventory in the field dropped 15% and the number of expensive emergency orders to the company's central distribution center dropped 90%, Pitney Bowes' Nichols says.

And according to J.C. Ehrlich's Norce, that company's technicians have signifi-

cantly increased their number of daily appointments. These are the kinds of returns that persuade business executives to keep investing in mobilization.

Be wary of wireless

Mobile applications that can be synched up with company servers a few times each day — perhaps even once a day — might work perfectly well (and are almost sure to cost significantly less). But companies tend to fall in love with the idea of real-time communication, and thus commit themselves to wireless without analyzing whether employees need the technology. This can lead to fiscal disaster.

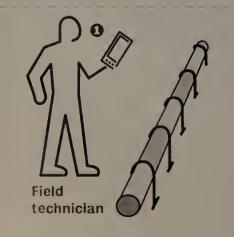
According to Gaughan, one company interviewed by AMR had so much trouble implementing its wireless network that the cost of its mobile project eventually doubled initial forecasts. The problems revolved around ensuring network availability and security/authentication. Another company went through three different handheld devices, unable to find one that matched mobile workers' needs.

True, real-time communication — that is, a wireless network with automatic background synchronization — is expensive and complex. While AMR says this solution might be needed for global logistics and transportation workers, it might be overkill for other employees. For example, delivery drivers whose routes vary little probably would need only a daily cradle-based synchronization.

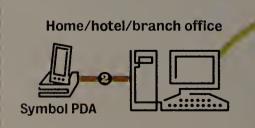
Shell Pipeline, a subsidiary of Shell Oil Products, went through this decision-making process. Over the past three years, Shell Pipeline undertook an implementation of SAP's ERP system. Initially, the SAP didn't affect Shell Pipeline's field technicians; they continued to mail paper forms

Shall game

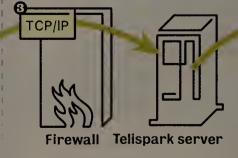
This PDA-based mobile system replaces handwritten reports that were mailed to company headquarters at the end of each week.



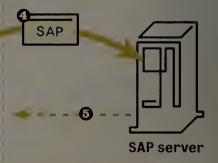
Shell Pipeline technician inspects a pipe at a remote location in Louisiana and enters SAP data onto a Symbol PDA running Telispark minspect software.



2 Technician syncs up with the network by cradling the PDA at the end of the day.



Oata is sent viaTCP/IP to Telispark server running mWorkManager software.



- Telispark server converts data to SAP format and transmits data to SAP server.
- SAP server updates database and sends updated data set and new information to technician.



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to headquarters, where the data was keyed in This process was inefficient, and the data was spotty and old by the time it made its way into the database.

For a time, Shell Pipeline asked the field technicians to become proficient SAP users; they printed out their work orders at the beginning of the week, and manually entered data into SAP at the end of the week. While this improved the quality of the data, it cut into the field technicians' critical "wrench time." It also creat-

ed an unhappy workforce; technicians had to work through more than 20 SAP screens to complete each report, and according to a Shell spokesman, they made no secret of their unhappiness with the system.

Shell decided to outfit the techs with handhelds and create applications that would let them enter work-order, inspection and status updates while in the field, and transmit the data to the SAP system.

The company first looked at wireless products for real-time communication, but decided public networks wouldn't support such an ambitious project, especially because the technicians are frequently in rural areas of California and Louisiana, where wireless simply won't work.

Shell settled on offline application access and cradle synchronization instead, using Telispark's mWorkManager and mlnspect applications, as well as Symbol Technologies 8100 handheld devices — at the time, the only devices that were rugged enough for the company's needs. Telispark enables two-way communication between field technicians and SAP.

When technicians cradle their Symbol 8100s and transmit back to headquarters, data first goes through the Telispark server, then into the SAP system, updating records as needed. Next, information downloads from SAP, through the Telispark server and out to the field. Shell says the company built special firewalls and devoted massive attention to security protocols at the Telispark-SAP connection point.

J.C. Ehrlich is moving toward wireless, Norce says, but the company has become comfortable with using cradles. Technicians' devices run software that generates a text file and multiple database files. Through either a cradle or a wireless connection, the techs send their day's intermation to the company's AS/400, which splits the data and routes it to the appropriate application or database.

During the business day customer service reps ser up technicians' appointments for the next day At night that data is downloaded to handhelds.

Don't overlook training

More going mobile

A recent survey by AMR

Research found that

classified as mobile.

Training is a vital part of any mobile project because users often are reluctant to alter their work processes, and might resent the new technology. Shell Pipeline overcame this hurdle by selecting 40 volunteers (out of 300 technicians) to become "super users." The volunteers were trained on the Symbol handheld and the Telispark applications, then they trained their peers. Shell Pipeline says this peer training led to rapid acceptance

of the mobile devices, though there are still a few diehards who want to write on the back of an envelope.

The company estimates it's cut down on field technicians' paperwork by 80%; saved the workers up to three hours per week of

paperwork prep time; and slashed six to eight hours of data-entry time per technician per week.

Once Pitney Bowes settled on Siebel and Antenna, the integration was "no different than anything else," Nichols says. The non-technical facets of integration were more challenging, he adds. "We got the end-user community involved in explaining the world they live in. [IT] project team members went out to walk in users' shoes for a day, and we had a lot of workshop sessions to talk about functionality."

Gartner's Jones says that steady technological improvements have pushed other challenges to the fore among companies considering mobile applications. For example, "Before mobility, [field service] engineers would come to a regional office in the morning to fill out forms, pick up new forms and chat around the coffee machine."

Equipping those engineers with wireless devices eliminates the need to visit that office daily, which would appear to be a good thing.

However, Jones says studies indicate that "the way field-service engineers learn to fix things is not to read manuals or bulletins — but to talk to each other at the coffee machine. Take that away and you've broken what sociologists call 'the community of practice.'"

As mobile computing technology matures, you can expect these "soft" challenges to gain prominence. In a way, that's good news — many of the technology challenges are now manageable, if you proceed cautiously.

Ulfelder is a freelance technology and business writer in Southborough, Mass. He can be reached at sulfelder@charter.net.

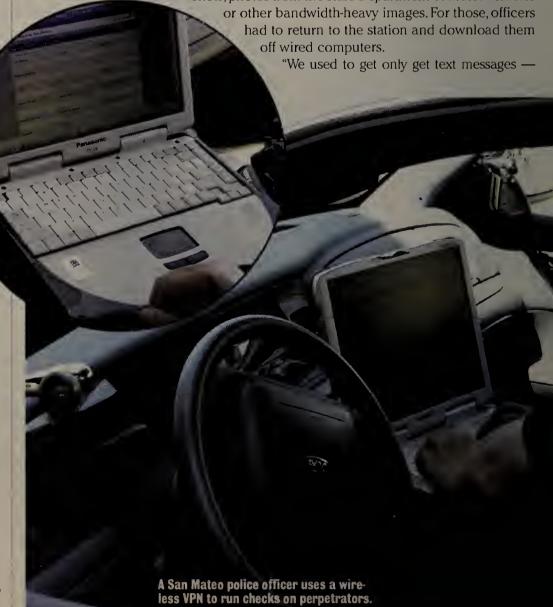


BY DEBORAH RADCLIFF

A high-speed pursuit along the 101 Peninsula ends in a San Mateo neighborhood where the suspect abandons his car and disappears on foot. A San Mateo police officer responding to the call runs the suspect's plates and brings up a photograph on his dash-mounted Panasonic Tough Book.

The California Highway Patrol officer who started the pursuit identifies the suspect from the picture. Then the San Mateo Police Department officer blasts the image to all patrol cars on duty, and the suspect is picked up off the streets 5 minutes later.

Until July, the SMPD's dash-mounted computers could only download small amounts of text, painfully slowly, over a data radio network. And forget about mug shots, photos from the state Department of Motor Vehicles





San Mateo cops create wireless web to snare criminals.

'white male, five-foot-eight, 180 pounds.' That's not very helpful," says Lt. Wayne Hoss, IT director for the SMPD, who received a \$450,000 grant that financed the Wi-Fi hot zone. "Now from our cars, we can put together a photo lineup of potential criminals, show the lineup to victims at the site of the crime, and print it as evidence for later on."

The officers have a square mile of wireless Web access in and around the municipal and entertainment districts on the El Camino Real. By year-end that range will about double.

When they're in range of the Wi-Fi hot zone, patrol officers (and soon, foot and bike patrols over PDAs) have wireless VPN access to the state's Department of Motor

shots, missing children reports, the sex offender registry and emergency dispatchers.

Cell hopping

In the first phase, 17 enhanced 802.11b Wi-Fi access points, being protected from the elements in a cast-aluminum casing, are placed about two blocks apart in a grid pattern and plugged into the photo adapters atop the city's light posts. In the next phase, the deployment will make use of newer-generation Wi-Fi cells, with a more powerful 1-watt radio unit, so the SMPD will need only 10 boxes to cover three-quarters of a square mile. The Wi-Fi cells are produced by start-up Tropos Networks.

A hot zone is not to be confused with a hot spot, says Sri Srikirishna, founder and CTO of Tropos. A hot spot is a small-area 802.11b wireless network that plugs into fiber such as those used in cafe's, airports, hotels, Starbucks and, soon, McDonald's. A hot zone spreads the coverage by using a more-powerful radio, and then hopping signals from cell to cell until they reach a backhaul into the wire, a process called cell hopping.

Of the SMPD's 17 Wi-Fi cells, only three connect to the city's pre-existing network: at the Parks and Recreation Department in the center of town, the fire department on the south and the police station on north.

While not for business campuses, which already have high-bandwidth wire for backhaul points, hot zones are particularly suited to areas where back-haul points are spotty or when the user base is spread out and moving, like at the SMPD, Srikirishna, says. Hot zones also are selling in downtown shopping districts. For example in Half Moon Bay, an ISP has installed the Tropos Wi-Fi cells and established a pay-for-use wireless portal for shoppers and diners.

"Nowadays, the concept is extending to anyplace a business wants to provide access," he says. "The challenge is that running wired backhaul into each of these cells is prohibitive because you need high-throughput wires — and they're



What:

Who: The San Mateo Police Department, San Mateo, Calif.

Hot-zone wireless network covering one square mile using 17 pole-

mounted, enhanced Wi-Fi boxes with only three back-haul points. To come: Phase 2 to cover another three-quarters of a square mile with 10 pole-

mounted Wi-Fi boxes, to be completed by year-end.

Product: Tropos 5110 1w outdoor Wi-Fi cell: \$3,195. Tropos Control Element Management System: \$295 per license (minimum initial order of 20

licenses for \$5,000).

Places where high-bandwidth wiring would be prohibitive, such as Applications: downtown areas and malls where a single entity (ISP or Chamber of Commerce) could spread out access and relieve merchants from purchasing and managing their own 802.11b boxes and high-bandwidth fiber connections. Also for municipal mobile applications, emergency services, dispatched city enginees, and other uses in which data is required while moving through

Tropos' wireless routing technology sends packets from cell to cell following the most efficient route to the nearest fiber trunk by examining signal characteristics in network paths available.

'Cell hopping is very much conceptually like the Internet," says Srikirishna, who adds that in the 1970s, the military used this concept to try and create wireless ad hoc networks to connect troops on the battlefield.

Securing the signals

With any wireless installation, securing the laptops, encrypting the data in transit, monitoring and filtering firewalls at the entrance to the fiber network are paramount, says Diana Kelly, wireless security expert and security strategist at Computer Associates.

For security, the SMPD uses a NetMotion VPN for point-to-point, 128-bit encryption. Tropos' traffic filtering is built into all Wi-Fi cells, which are monitored for performance through Tropos' SNMP-compliant monitoring and management server called Patrol. In addition, the SMPD put a firewall/intrusion- detection server between the wired network and the Wi-Fi

But during deployment, laptop security

A few Tropos Wi-Fi cells are already in place in the San got a little over-Mateo area.

their territories.

MAHAMAHAMAHAMA

looked. Aside from

two-factor authentication — one for computer access and the second for access to the officer's Web portal, LawNet — the laptops have no firewalls and can't be monitored for security policy compliance. But Hoss says he's talking to security vendor, Symantec, about putting firewalls on the

"We're getting on that, especially now that one of our computers has a vicus on it and we can't find which one it is," Hoss says."We had a numbering system. But the officers keep moving the computers from car to car because they save stuff locally on their drives, usually an unfinished report, that they want to get back to."

Radcliff is a freelance writer in Northern California She can be reached at de world-



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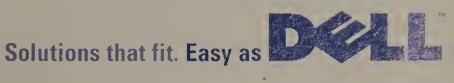
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TESTER'S CHOICE Joel Snyder



Diane Greene is my hero

arly this year I got to meet Diane Greene, CEO and one of the founders of VMware, maker of one of my favorite lab tools.

Most CEOs aren't my cup of tea. They get

picked for those spots based on leadership potential, vision and ability to attract piles of cash from venture capital firms. All this is great for them, but not very interesting for a techie like me, who is down here in the trenches, getting dirty writing code.

When I met Greene we spent a half-hour talking about the internals of the company's flagship host-emulation software, VMware. We chatted about the ugly part of emulating a CPU without breaking things, restarting instructions, register models and memory management. Fascinating stuff. I came away impressed. But the last thing she said to me stuck: "Don't just test our software, use our software."

I did and that is why she is my hero. Her software lets me run multiple emulated Intel virtual machines on top of one physical machine, with each virtual machine running its own copy of whatever operating system I want.

In the lab, we've traditionally used removable hard drives to handle our need to run several operating systems on the same machines. We'll create a "master" for an operating system and then use Symantec's Ghost (another great lab tool) to clone it onto hard drives. For every new product tested, we slide in a hard drive, boot it up and give each vendor a clean slate to run on. But this setup limits us to testing one vendor's product at a time.

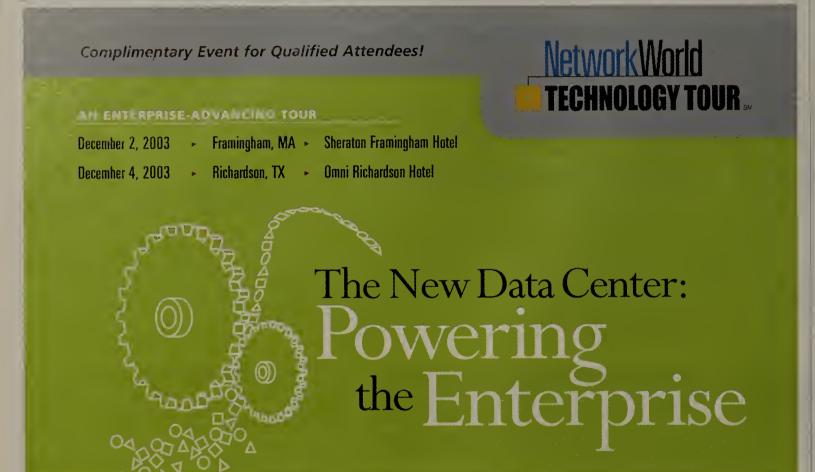
In our recent anti-spam test (see www.nw fusion.com, DocFinder: 7624) the limitations posed by our typical technique was a showstopper. I needed to have 16 products running at once. I borrowed two copies of VMware's GSX server, put 3G bytes of memory in two of our dual-CPU lab systems, created eight virtual machines on each server, and voilà, I had 16 speedy, perfectly isolated virtual systems running a mix of Windows and Linux. With a tool like VMware, my job became a whole lot easier — and I did it all in 4U of rack space.

One of the fears about emulated systems is that they will be slow. That wasn't my experience. During configuration and installation, VM ware "felt" as fast as the underlying hardware running without VM ware. If I put it in full-screen mode, it was easy to forget that I was running on an emulator. The virtual machines never knew what was happening to them. They happily got their own IP addresses, crashed, rebooted, wrote to private disk space and went on about their business without any conflicts.

Of course, VMware isn't perfect. It takes a lot of memory (but so does Microsoft Office). My applications weren't badly behaved, thrashing the disk or paging a lot, which would have made things uncomfortable. I wasn't testing performance or some special I/O subsystem or encryption board for which direct access to the hardware would have been critical. It's not the ultimate answer to every testing problem. But it saved me from having to buy 16 systems, power them, find KVM ports, air condition them and stack them somewhere.

Diane: When's your birthday? I want to send you flowers.

Snyder is a senior partner at Opus One in Tucson, Ariz. He can be reached at Joel.Snyder@opus1.com.



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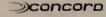
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Power to the people

Network executives get bright ideas by associating with IT user groups targeted at their specific industries.

■ BY LINDA LEUNG

The collapse of the once-influential Communications Managers Association last August and of the International Communications Association in the first quarter of 2002 points to the fading relevancy of such broad-based user groups established during the industry's early years. Because general information about technology is plentiful, many busy network executives are turning to smaller, targeted user groups.

Along with providing network opportunities, some smaller groups let IT professionals work together to define technology standards for their specific industries. Other groups offer repositories of information targeted to their membership profile. Here are some industry-specific user groups and why they are popular with their members:

Wall Street Technology Association

WSTA was established 36 years ago as a forum for IT professionals in the finance business. It holds eight seminars and two conferences per year, and publishes the *WSTA Ticker Magazine*, which provides case studies and reports on technologies.

According to Mark Sanders, WSTA president and CTO for New York asset management firm John A. Levin & Co., the association is unbiased regarding technology. "I don't feel I have enough vision or depth to want to push the group behind one technology. It would be more beneficial to the industry if we were a knowledge capital and educated everyone to be well-educated buyers," he says.

John Pagliaro is project management coordinator at brokerage firm Garban Intercapital, which has been a member company of WSTA for 12 years. He says membership has been invaluable in helping Garban pick from the slew of vendors that contacted the company when it moved to a new facility in Jersey City, N.J., after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. "If we know the vendor already has some success in our sector [through reading case studies in *Ticker*] that gives us confidence," he says.

Association for Gooperative Operations Research and Development

Based in New York and founded in 1970, ACORD is a global association that is developing XML standards for the insurance industry

ACORD originally was set up to standardize the paperwork that is generated and passed between insurers. In the 1980s it developed insurance industry-specific electronic data interchange standards, and now it is creating business messages and mappings based on XML.

The organization also provides a safe haven for its members, says Rick Gilman, ACORD vice president of communications. "We're able to get competitors around the table to discuss standards, which otherwise couldn't be done without the antitrust protection ACORD offers," he says.

Insurance company American National of Galveston, Texas, has been an ACORD member

for a year. "At ACORD, insurance companies can talk frankly without being seen as though we're in cahoots," says Carol Chapman, a senior staff analyst for the company.

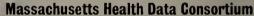
American National is piloting the use of Extended Tabular Markup Language (XTbML), a standard for the transfer of tabulated data that ACORD helped to define. According to Chapman, XTbML lets insurance companies streamline the way they communicate with each other and reduce the chances of miscommunication errors during data transfer.

Standard for Technology in Automotive Retail

Set up in 2001, STAR is working on developing industry-specific XML standards for communications among dealers and auto manufacturers. So far, it has defined 22 XML formats, including Credit Application and Parts Order, and STAR says there could be hundreds more. In November, STAR plans to publish its Dealership Infrastructure Guideline, aimed at helping dealers install LANs and become Internet-ready.

"The benefit to manufacturers like Toyota is that more than half the work has been done in designing an infrastructure [for communications between manufacturer and dealer]," says Tom Campisi, STAR communications chair and architecture analyst at Toyota in Torrance, Calif.

He adds that dealers that sell vehicles from multiple manufacturers could save hundreds of thousands of dollars if they adopt the standard XML formats, because they would not have to deploy separate communication systems for each of the manufacturers with which they deal.



MHDC members are healthcare providers, insurance companies and government agencies that operate in Massachusetts. The group holds a number of forums aimed at specific job roles such as ClOs, privacy officers, security officers and Webmasters, plus offers general information about health-related technologies and regulations.

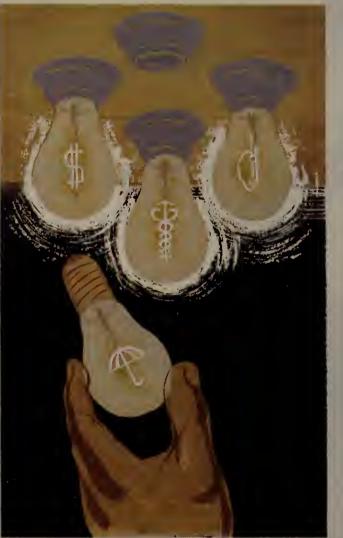
MHDC is working on several security initiatives to help its members meet the requirement of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. It is working with the Open Group to drive compatibility between e-mail vendors that support the secure S/MIME gateway.

Claudia Boldman, director of policy and architecture for the commonwealth of Massachusetts' IT division in Boston, says an earlier MHDC pilot of S/MIME gateway interoperability inspired the state government last year to introduce its own pilot test with MHDC and two other member groups. She says that as a neutral organization, MHDC is in an ideal position to promote vendor interoperability, which would not have been easy for a state government to do for fear of being mistaken as a government mandate or a government-sponsored program.

"Because MHDC is a large association that has members of all sizes, it provides us with a representative cross-section of our business partners to ensure that our approach to secure e-mail works for both large and small organizations," Boldman adds.

Toin Coffey, chief security officer at Cambridge Health Alliance, a hospital network that has been a member organization for five years, also praises MHDC's S/MIME.

"Associations need to have substance, quality and directly provide value for members — S/MIME is one example," says Coffey, who is a member of MHDC's Security Officers Forum. MHDC's local meetings also are a boon because many organizations have cut travel budgets. ■



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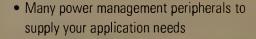
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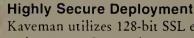
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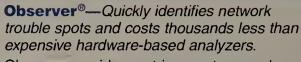


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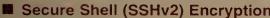
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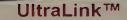
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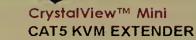
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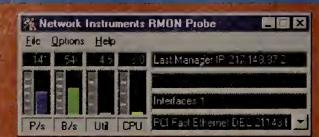
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IT PROFESSIONALS

Senior Consultant
Responsible for integration testing for Enabler and Ensemble in the areas of Product Catalog/Price Plan, Rater/AGF/MPS, and Billing. Plan and implement the rollout of an order entry and provisioning system for the Indirect Sales Channel. Lead teams to ensure successful systems implementation utilizing ASP, HTML, JAVA Script, Visual Basic Script, and Oracle DB. Develop test plans and test scripts and lead teams for efficient testing and defect resolution. Responsible for gathering system requirements, applying business requirements to system requirements and identifying process gaps in the in production support process. Identify key business processes to be impacted by the new system in the area of Billing, Customer Care, Sales, Price Plans, Collections and design postlaunch Production Support processes. Produce quality deliverables to supplement the reporting needs of the project. Utilizing SOL queries and Excel Macros produce necessary reports in an effective process minimizing manual intervention. Provide required training for post implementation support. Manage defect tracking and reporting using Mercury Interactive Test Director tool. The wage offered is \$63,390. The work schedule is Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm. The Minimum Requirements are as follows: Bachelor's degree or equivalent in Computer Science, Engineering (any type), Math, Information Systems, or Business Administration + 3 years exp. as a Systems Analyst or Consultant. Employer will regard a foreign degree to be equivalent to a U.S. Bachelor's degree as determined by an accredited credential evaluation service. In addition, must have at least 6 months of experience utilizing: ASP, SQL, HTML, Java Script, Visual Basic Script, Oracle DB, and Enabler and Mercury Interactive Test Director tool and at least 2 years of experience utilizing Ensemble.

Please send your resume, referencing Job Order Number WEB366859 to:
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Software Engineer - Architect, plan & configure DSS tools (Siebel Analytics, Microstrategy & Informatica). Should be able to gather business requirements from clients. Responsible for architecting, installing, configuring and testing Siebel Analytics & informatica in Oracle environment. Should have hands-on experience working with Administration tool, designer and web catalogues. 2 years experience on the job with a Master's Degree in Science/Math/Computer/Engg/Managem ent.Location: Deerfield Beach Shiva Systems 5749 Camino Del Sol Unit 206 Boca Raton FL 33433

Senior Web Developer: Design software. Develop desktop ver sions using VB and Access Develop Web and PDA versions Develop Web and PDA versions using J2EE (EJB/JSP). Requires: B.S. in Electrical Engineering. Must have hands on knowledge of J2EE (EJB/JSP), MS SQL Server, Access and VB. 40hrs/wk (8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.); \$58,000.00/yr. Send two resumes/responses to Case Number 200203053 Labor Exchange Office, 19 Startford Street, 1st Floor Boston, MA 02114



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IT PROFESSIONALS

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Must have implementatio Must have implementation knowledge of multiple application servers such as WebLogic WebSphere or Tomcat. Send esume w/ cover letter to Praxis Technology Group, LLC, Attn: Darcy Bedford, 1500 NW 118th St., Des Moines, IA 50325.

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T PROFESSIONALS

Senior Consultant Evaluate & analyze business process requirements, define systems strategy, develop sys-tems requirements, design, prototype & implement business solutions, & define support pro-cedures. Perform detailed analycedures. Perform detailed analysis & effective diagnosis, and propose solutions to client business process & technology issues with Cross Application Time Sheet (CA-TS) configuration (with integration to PS, PM and FI/CO) & implementing Time Evaluation including the development of user enhancements for Quota generation. ments for Quota generation Configure & implement Work Schedules, Absences & Attendances, and automatic Attendances, and automatic Quota Accruals utilizing SAF HR. Configure schema and per-sonnel calculation rules for Time Evaluation for Union and Non-Union employees to calculate work and non-work time, over time, holiday and convert the hours to time type and time

WAGE: \$98,850/year Hours worked: Monday-Friday 9:00am-5:00pm

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS: Bachelor's degree in Compute

Science, Engineering (any type) Math, Business Administration or Information Systems + 5 years exp. in the job offered or 5 years exp. as a Senio Consultant, SAP HR Consultant Consultant, System Analyst, Database Analyst. Related experience must include SAP HR and at least 6 months in Cross Application Time Shee (CA-TS) configuration (with integration to PS, PM and FI/CO).

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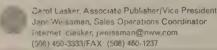
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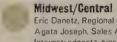


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Cisco

continued from page 1

persuasive convergence path for small businesses and branch offices. And by tapping its huge router installed base, the company could wrap up the small/midsize IP PBX market, which currently is wide open. But the technology also raises the familiar question of whether Cisco is cramming too much into its feature-heavy IOS code.

"This could do a lot for a company like us," says Dick Emford, lead network analyst for Newell Rubbermaid of Freeport, Ill., regarding IOS-based routers as a voice platform. The consumer and industrial plastics maker uses Cisco 2600 and 3700 routers to connect hundreds of offices and plants across the country, and is in the process of rolling out VolP over its WAN.

"For the cost of an IOS upgrade and some extra DRAM, you could go and give yourself a PBX at every branch," Emford says.

Running call-control services on a router is not new to Cisco. Users have been able to add IP PBX functions to Cisco's 1700, 2600 and 3700 series of routers since the release two years ago of IOS Version 12.2 with IOS Telephony Services.

Cisco customers have deployed more than 2,000 live routers with IOS Telephony Services, but Cisco kept the IP PBX features in the background while it developed the product's stability and features.

"We wanted to gain experience, get some customer success and enhance the features" before announcing it as a product, says Mark Monday, director of product management for Cisco's Multi-service Customer Edge business unit. He adds that there are no plans yet to offer IOS-based call-control features into larger routers, such as the 7500 series.

Along with CallManager Express, Cisco this month also released a blade for its routers that adds a small-office version of its Unity unified voice mail/e-mail software for up to 120 users, giving customers a complete phone and messaging system in one box. CallManager Express uses Cisco's IP phones and Skinny protocol (which provides call-setup features), and can be integrated with its larger CallManager IP PBX servers. CallManager Express licenses range from \$750 to \$2,800, and Unity Express starts at \$2,995.

"The fact that Cisco publicly announced this when it had sort of kept this feature quiet in the past shows that Cisco is much more confident in its ability to provide the telephony," says Brian Riggs, an analyst with Current Analysis.

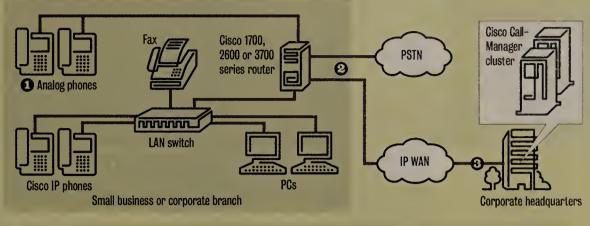
In the past, Cisco has used its leverage with enterprise data-equipment buyers to sell its IP telephony gear. Cisco leads the IP phone market, with half of the 1.4 million IP phones shipped worldwide in 2002 — five times the shipments of its nearest competitors, according to Synergy Research Group. Cisco also had 60% of the \$576 million in last year's worldwide LAN telephony sales (phones, IP PBXs and gateways), Synergy says.

Competition catching up

But some analysts say the competition is catching up, and even beating Cisco in some key segments of the LAN telephony

Cisco's VolP trump card?

By integrating small-office IP PBX functions into its routers, Cisco is looking to let companies deploy VoIP more easily.



• Analog phones connect directly to a Cisco router, and IP phones connect via a LAN switch.

The router handles all call control — such as call routing and features — as well as public switched telephone network (PSTN) trunking and IP WAN routing.

8 Branch offices can connect to a larger Cisco VolP network through the WAN.

market

For example, the telephony research firm Infotech reports that in the small/branch office systems market (40 to 100 users), Cisco had only 11% of the combined IP PBX/IP-enabled PBX line shipments in the second quarter. Cisco still leads all vendors in pure-IP (no TDM technology) and hybrid IP PBX (a mix of TDM and IP switching), with 26% of line shipments in the second quarter. (Avaya was second with 16%, and Nortel was third with 13%).

Meanwhile, deployments in branch offices and small businesses tend to be the norm for IP telephony; the average number of lines deployed last year on an IP/converged PBX was 67, Synergy says.

To address this, Cisco over the last year has tried to offer a small-business VoIP package consisting of scaled-down CallManager servers. This effort has not been successful, as customers have turned to small-office boxes such as Avaya's IP Office, Mitel's ICP and Nortel's BCM, says Frank Stinson, program director at Infotech.

"Cisco is hoping that they've finally got the right combo as far as features and pricing for that market," he adds.

The right VolP fit

The IT group at clothing retailer Abercrombie and Fitch likes this combination, as the firm is in the process of replacing Panasonic key systems with Cisco 1700 routers and the CallManager Express IOS image in all 644 of its U.S. stores. Each store supports five to 10 IP phones. The router-based IP PBXs in each store are

managed from a centralized Cisco CallManager in the company's headquarters in Columbus, Ohio.

The product was more costeffective than deploying a Cisco router and some of the smalloffice IP PBXs the company looked at, such as Nortel's BCM, 3Com's NBX and a SIP-based box from PingTel. The company expects to save \$400 to \$600 per location on IP PBX hardware, phones and software licenses, says Steven Graves, senior manage of network technology for the shopping-mall-based clothier.

"It just made more sense to roll out one box to all the stores after we ran those numbers," he says.

These economics could be devastating to Cisco's competitors, some observers say, as it could potentially use its 70% market share in the access router market to generate new VolP installs.

"With a software upgrade they can make a router customer into [an IP PBX customer]," says Frank Dzubeck, president of consulting firm Communications Network Architects. "No one else can do that."

Others say CallManager Express does not make the small/midsize enterprise VolP market less competitive for Cisco.

"Cisco will still face competition from established platforms, such as Alcatel's OmniPCX Office and Avaya's IP Office, which sell for less," writes analyst Steven Blood of Gartner in a recent report on Cisco's IOS-based telephony plans.

"This is not the beginning of the end for traditional small-office vendors, such as Avaya, Nortel and Mitel," Current Analysis' Riggs says. He says the IP PBX functions on IOS still will come up short for some customers in terms of call features, support and reliably.

Banking on Cisco

One such customer is Citizens' Bank in Flint, Mich., which has Cisco routers in 185 branches throughout the Midwest. The bank uses Siemens HiPath 3500 IP-enabled PBXs to tie together 70 of its offices. Chuck Wasson, vice president of technology, says the Siemens gear offers more features and includes more sophisticated call routing than any IP systems he's seen.

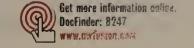
"I've always been wary of Cisco as a telephony provider," Wasson says. And after a complex companywide Cisco IOS and router hardware upgrade that caused some heartburn, he says he'd be hesitant to throw telephony features on top of his WAN boxes.

"Cisco needs to just work on making a few versions of IOS work well," he says.

"They need to cut down the number of IOS versions so your tech isn't trying to figure out the matrix of release versions and features," he adds.

After a scare over the summer when a major flaw in Cisco's software was discovered, users might also want to think twice about putting all their eggs in one IOS başket, others say.

"The fundamental question is, how much do you want to make something into a universal platform?" Dzubeck says, adding that Cisco routers can now do so. "And how willing are you to make something the focal point of failure."



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BackSpin Mark Gibbs



Processes and improbabilities

fter last week's column about business-process insanity described through the tale of a Dell customer who had to return a computer to get a sales price on the same machine, reader Mark Mushkin wrote: "It's the sad reality of our big-corporate-big-picture world that

makes this the norm. In corporate terms, how much would it cost to change an internal process vs. [what it cost Dell to take the computer back and ship out another one at the lower price]? My guess is the loss is small potatoes compared with the actual cost of a process change."

Absolutely right. It is always a costly exercise to analyze and re-engineer internal business processes. The philosophy in many organizations is along the lines of if it ain't completely broke, don't even think about fixing it. Or to put that another way, if it is slightly broken, leave it alone.

Now I'm sure that this philosophy seems rational to many people. But the problem with this way of thinking — of ignoring anything that isn't an undeniable disaster — is that disregarded problems are never solitary; they are always part of a constellation of problems.

It is like ignoring a pothole in the road because it isn't big enough to swallow a car. And along with

that, ignoring the fallen tree branch, the dropped bricks and the oil spill. Each is not a disaster in and of itself, but seen as a whole, the road can hardly be considered usable.

And what happens when you have lots of overlooked minor problems is that you can easily find your situation reaches a point where, because of a single event, everything suddenly turns to chaos. A gasoline truck swerves to avoid the branch, skids on the oil, turns over because of the pothole, and the bricks rip the gas tank and boom! The entire street goes up in flames.

Reader Herbert DuPree wrote to point out that, "Dell won't know or care about this because it's presently the exception and not the rule. If they were losing real cash on this ...they would pay attention. It also [needs] to have enough of these complaints to make a difference."

DuPree's point about complaining is interesting. I contend that the explosion of automated corporate telephone and e-mail systems is training us to not complain because they make it so hard to do so and ultimately reward us with no satisfaction.

It is always the same: You have a problem with a product or service so you call the customer service number. After you navigate a score of options, loop around the prompt system a few times, try hitting zero or hash (with no result) in the hope of getting

to a human being, you finally (after the hold from hell) reach a customer service representative only to find that the rep can do nothing helpful and can't pass you on to anyone other than his supervisor, who has an educational level just above kindergarten and the personality of a brick.

As for e-mail customer service and support, what a joke! I have found perhaps a handful of organizations that have any competence when it comes to e-mail support.

Typically any kind of e-mail service or support is simply a huge black hole. I suspect that once your message crosses the messaging event horizon it immediately drops out of the universe and appears as spam in an alternate universe.

Perhaps we get much of our spam the same way
— customer service and support messages drop out
of other universes into this one and through some
strange consequence of quantum physics appear in
our mail systems in Earth languages offering body
part enlargement or photos of hot mature women.
That would certainly explain the bizarre message I
got yesterday that appeared to be an ad in Russian
for a pizza parlor in Moscow.

Then again, is that more improbable than companies addressing their inefficient business processes?

Answers to backspin@gibbs.com.

NetBuzz News, insights, opinions and oddities

By Paul McNamara

Plenty found Site Finder

Now we know why VeriSign remains so headstrong about quickly reactivat-

ing Site Finder — its suspended redirection service that appears to have generated little but ill will and bad press for the company.

Turns out Site Finder also generated a boatload of traffic.

In August, VeriSign sites ranked only 135th in terms of overall visitors, according to a monthly accounting of Internet traffic conducted by comScore Media Metrix. This placed VeriSign in the company of sites operated by the National Institutes of Health and the U.S. Department of Education (Nos. 133 and 134); in other words, not exactly your beachfront 'Net real estate.

But that was before Site Finder started ushering alphabetically challenged Web surfers to a VeriSign site for "help" whenever they misspelled or mistyped a .com or .net URL. While VeriSign touts this automatic detour as a public service and pooh-poohs technical complaints about it, competitors, antispam vendors and a host of old-time Internet hands have portrayed the gambit as a nakedly commercial power grab.

This much appears beyond dispute: Internet users can't spell, don't know where they're going, or both.

In September, VeriSign rocketed to No. 11 on the survey, nestled right up there with household names such as Amazon (No. 8) and Disney (No. 13). The 30.8 million visitors VeriSign welcomed last month represented more than a fivefold increase over August and dwarfed the monthly gains experienced by any other company. That the bulk arrived there by virtue of twitchy typing might taint the achievement, but as they say of bloop hits in baseball: They all look the same in a box score.

Oh, and that's No. 11 with a bullet: The September gains for VeriSign reflect only about two weeks' worth of Site Finder-generated traffic, as the service

was activated on Sept. 15. A full 30 days would no doubt have floated VeriSign even higher in the ranking — perhaps as high as the rarified air of the Top 5.

We won't be certain about that for a while, of course, because VeriSign pulled Site Finder over into a rest area on Oct. 3.

(Pop quiz: What are the top 5 most-visited companies on the 'Net, according to comScore Media Metrix? . . . Answer below.)

There were other interesting tidbits in this traffic report, including the revelation that the number of Internet users in the U.S. now exceeds 150 million. Math isn't my strong suit, but in a country of 290 million or so, that sure looks like more than half. If you consider adults only, we're probably talking two-thirds. Back out the prison population, the comatose and my dad — who needs to get an ATM card before graduating to the Internet — and the number of those online as a percentage of those who might reasonably be expected to be online starts creeping ever closer to 100%.

And, if you like looking at rankings and lists as much as Buzz, you might spot something like this: What on earth can explain the fact that two of the top 30 sites provide information about . . . the weather? The Weather Channel and Weatherbug.com attracted 23.6 million and 15.5 million visitors, respectively, in September.

This means that if the two weather sites merged and brought their current traffic along for the ride, the combined company would represent the eighthmost-visited destination on the 'Net; a notch above Amazon.

Keep that in mind the next time you're fuming about your localTV station wasting so much time dissecting every detail about tomorrow's forecast. They know what sells.

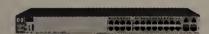
Quiz answer: The five companies whose Web sites draw the most visitors are, in descending order: Microsoft, AOL Time Warner, Yahoo, eBay and Google.

Some days I swear my in-box is No. 6, but that's not a complaint. The address is buzz@nww.com.



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